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**An investigation into the place meanings of recreational climbers at an
indoor rock climbing venue**

by

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Canterbury Christ Church University

Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Masters by Research

2018

Abstract

Indoor rock climbing venues were originally designed as a training site for outdoor rock climbers. However, more recently these venues have been used by climbers who have chosen to remain indoors for the experiences that these sites provide. In addition, the provision of indoor rock climbing facilities has greatly increased in England and Wales in recent years. Yet despite this growth and the popularity of the sport, little is known about the experiences of the people who identify themselves as indoor rock climbers. Without this information, there is incomplete knowledge of the meanings behind the indoor rock climbing experience.

Therefore, this research study has investigated the place meanings of seven recreational indoor rock climbers who have chosen to remain within an indoor venue. The research employed an interpretative case study design using participant observations and semi-structured interview methods to collect the data. A process of coding and a thematic analysis revealed three place meaning themes: 1) The efficiency of the physical setting, 2) The challenge of the climbing experience, and 3) Social relationships at the venue.

These findings indicated that the construction of participant's place meanings that encapsulated their experiences were dependent on both the physical qualities that define the setting, and the social interactions with the people at the venue. These place meanings uncovered important place attachments associated with place dependency, place identity and social bonding. This has shed light on the meanings and attachment bonds that develop at an indoor rock climbing venue.

Key words: Indoor rock climbing, place meaning, place attachment.

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It was always a privilege to be your climbing partner.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Positionality

My experience of indoor rock climbing has come from working as a Physical Education (PE) teacher at a secondary school. There was an indoor rock climbing wall within the school and I was trained as a site-specific instructor. I soon witnessed the positive way the students were responding to the experiences that they had when climbing that went beyond simply getting to the top. I could see how the student's emotions transformed from fear to exhilaration, and how their confidence grew from one challenge to another. They were as passionate about helping others within their climbing group to achieve, as much as they were about their own success. The strong sense of this personal and social growth was clear to see. The sport was incorporated within the School's PE National Curriculum, including being an activity option at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) level, and it was also part of the extra-curricular sports programme.

Our school was invited to take part in a Kent bouldering league against other schools. These were schools that were also equipped with an indoor rock climbing wall, and each event was hosted by one of the schools. While I was at these events I observed more students experiencing the positive aspects of this sport. Around this time, two of my work colleagues had started to regularly use a local indoor rock climbing venue. I became intrigued by how this sport was becoming more popular. I continued to teach indoor rock climbing until a sudden illness meant that I couldn't work for six months. Fortunately, I returned to work physically recovered but lacking in teaching confidence. Teaching indoor rock climbing to smaller groups enabled me to build my confidence back up again. For me, indoor rock climbing came to symbolise my recovery back to full-time PE teaching. Therefore, this personal experience, as well as the previous experiences that I have had as a teacher, gave me an interest in undertaking a research study about indoor rock climbing meanings.

1.2 Research background and rationale

Historically indoor rock climbing venues were used as a training tool in preparation for outdoor climbing (Kulczycki and Hinch, 2014; Zimmerman, 2008) or as an alternative option when climbing outside was not possible due to bad weather (Eden and Barratt, 2010). Hence these venues were originally designed for outdoor climbers coming inside, which explains why previous literature about the meanings and experiences of indoor rock climbing facilities has been from the judgements made by outdoor rock climbers (Eden and Barratt, 2010; Barratt, 2011; Kulczycki and Hinch, 2014). However, in more recent times indoor rock climbing has become a popular sport in its own right; with recent statistics from the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) showing a 16% increase in the provision of indoor climbing walls between 2012 and 2016 (BMC, 2011; BMC, 2015). In addition to this, Sport Climbing (or competition climbing as it's more commonly known in the United Kingdom) has recently been declared a new Olympic sport by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo, Japan (BMC, 2016). The three climbing disciplines that make up Sport Climbing (lead, speed and bouldering) all take place on artificial climbing walls. Therefore, these activities that take place within an indoor rock climbing venue will feature on the biggest global sports stage.

These developments in the growth of indoor rock climbing indicate that it is no longer seen as an alternative climbing option. People identify themselves as indoor rock climbers and take part in the sport on its own merit. Consequently, climbers are choosing to remain indoors for the experiences that these venues provide. However, the issue is that little is known about these experiences and without this information, there is incomplete knowledge of the meanings behind this growth sport. Previous research by Kulczycki and Hinch (2014) have looked at place meanings in indoor rock climbing venues. However, their research sample were people who regularly climbed outdoors and did not offer experiences from climbers who have chosen to remain indoors to climb. Hence, this research aims to fill this gap by investigating the place meanings of a group of recreational indoor rock climbers who have chosen to remain indoors. This will offer a unique insight into the attachment bonds that this sample group develops at an indoor rock climbing venue and will add further knowledge to the modern indoor rock climbing experience.

1.3 Research aim and questions

Taking into account the researcher's experience and the gap in knowledge of the indoor rock climbing experience, the following research aim and questions were developed:

Research aim: To investigate the place meanings of recreational climbers at an indoor rock climbing venue.

Research questions:

1. What place meanings are constructed from the interactions with the physical indoor rock climbing setting?
2. How does the climbing action construct place meanings?
3. How does the interaction with the social world at the venue construct place meanings?

These questions were developed to target a broad range of the participant's place meanings at the indoor rock climbing venue. In order to collect this evidence, participant observations and semi-structured interviews were used.

1.4 The concepts of place meaning and place attachment

Place meanings are used to reveal people's lived experience in a place (Manzo, 2005; Main, 2013). These meanings can range from adjectival descriptions to symbolic statements about the nature or content of a place (Stedman et al., 2014). Whereas, place attachment is the emotional bonds that people form with places (Altman and Low, 1992). Thus, place attachment is closely associated with the place meaning because it is the place meanings that reveal the attachment bond that individuals form with places and are the symbols on which attachment rests (Stedman et al., 2014).

Place-based research has previously focused on residential settings. However, over the last 15 years research has extended into many non-residential places such as everyday neighbourhood areas (Manzo, 2005), urban public parks (Main, 2013; Johnson, Glover and Stewart, 2014), a multicultural festival site for migrants (McClinchey, 2017), and an agricultural fair (Kyle and Chick, 2007). Specific outdoor sites for sports such as cycling on Mont Ventoux in France (Spinney, 2006) and ski resorts in Canada (Roult, Adjizian and

Auger, 2016) have also been used to reveal people's experiences and attachments to a place, and how these places can enrich their lives. These studies have made an important contribution to place meaning research, although interestingly considering the popularity of indoor sport venues (Kramer et al., 2015; Deelen, Ettema and Dijst, 2016) little place research has been undertaken within these sites. Therefore, a place meaning research study at an indoor rock climbing venue will contribute towards research within the indoor sport place.

1.5 Participants and setting

A case study approach was chosen to allow this contemporary phenomenon to be investigated within its real-life context (Yin, 2003). The participants were a group of recreational indoor rock climbers who climb together at least once a week at a South East London indoor rock climbing venue. There were seven participants consisting of six males and one female, with an age range of between 28 and 73 years. These are climbers who choose to remain within the indoor environment to experience indoor rock climbing as a sport in its own right. The researcher felt that the voices of recreational climbers would elicit a wealth of place meanings and experiences that would shine a light on the indoor rock climbing venue (further information about the participants and setting is addressed in the Research Methodology Section 3.6.1).

1.6 Acknowledgment to the contribution to Physical Education and Physical Activity

It is important to recognise the contribution that this research will have on Physical Education and Physical Activity. As outlined by the Department for Education (2013a), the action of climbing is a key area of a child's early physical development. For children who develop at a rate typical for their age, it is expected that as early as 22 months they are already focusing on climbing by pulling themselves up on nursery climbing equipment. At 30 to 50 months children are mounting stairs and steps using alternate feet and by 60 months they are travelling with confidence on climbing equipment (Department for Education, 2013a). This research can therefore be used to connect the physical development that the climbing action provides for a child to that of the climbing experiences as an adult.

Further to this, in revealing the place meanings of recreational indoor rock climbers, PE teachers can plan lessons to provide a greater opportunity for their students to have meaningful experiences when they climb. The findings will allow PE teachers to consider how the physical and social interactions of the activity can impact on a climber's experience and tailor lessons mindfully in accordance with this. From a physical activity perspective, this research will allow owners and managers of indoor rock climbing venues to be better placed to provide a service that meets the needs of their customers in consideration of the place meaning findings from this study.

Chapter 2

Literature review

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to outline, review and critique the topic areas relevant to this study's investigation into the place meanings of recreational climbers at an indoor rock climbing venue. The review of existing literature reveals a significant gap in research regarding the place meanings of climbers who have chosen to remain indoors for the experiences that these venues provide. This chapter begins by discussing the theoretical framework of Symbolic Interactionism and how it can be applied to this research. This leads on to the principle of place and how this can be a centre of meaning. It then considers indoor sport places and in particular the meanings that have been ascribed to these venues. The context of indoor rock climbing is then addressed from its past to present status, before outlining the key place meaning concepts including the types of emotional attachments that people form with places. Previous place meaning research is then critiqued and reviewed to give examples of the diverse range of places that people have attachments to, and their lived experiences within them. This chapter concludes by stating the aim and questions of this research which has been developed through the knowledge and findings of this literature review.

2.2 Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic Interactionism is a sociological theory used to understand and explain society and the human world (Crotty, 1998). This theory suggests that all human behaviour is social, involving social interaction and the development of shared meaning (Gilbert, 2008). According to Mead (1934) the self is not mentalistic but rather a social object which lies in the field of experience. Mead (1934) focused on how people interact in their daily lives by means of Symbolic Interaction and how they create order and meaning. The early work of interactionists like Mead (1934) would lay the foundations of the Symbolic Interactionist framework as a pragmatic method to interpret social interactions. It was then Blumer (1937; 1969), a student of Mead's, who coined the term Symbolic Interactionism and put forward an influential summary of what it meant.

Blumer's (1969) definition of Symbolic Interactionism focuses on the meanings we assign objects and how they impact the self. He believed that meanings for things should not be taken for granted or pushed aside as unimportant, but rather they are key in being responsible for human behaviour. Blumer (1969) suggests that Symbolic Interactionism is an approach to the study of human group life and rests in three fundamental premises. Firstly, that human beings act towards things on the basis of the meanings that they have for them. These 'things' include everything that the human being has in their world. He groups these into three types of worldly objects: physical objects, such as a chair or a tree; social objects, such as a student or a mother; and abstract objects, such as an idea or a moral principle. Blumer's (1969) second premise is that the meaning of such objects is derived from the social interaction that one has with others. The meaning of an object for a person grows out of the ways in which other people act towards the person with regard to the object. Other people's actions operate to define the object for the person, which may result in the same object having different meanings for different people.

Blumer's (1969) third premise is that these meanings are managed and revised through an interpretive process undertaken by the person dealing with the objects they encounter. This process has two clear steps. Firstly, the person has to identify to themselves the objects that have meaning. This is an internalised social process involving interaction between themselves and the object. Secondly, interpretation becomes a matter of handling meanings in light of the situation they are in. Consequently, interpretations and meanings for objects are not fixed and can change over time (Blumer, 1969). Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) agree that objects can construct different meanings for the same person at different times. This stance is also supported by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) who suggest that the construction and attribution of meanings for objects is a continuous process and subject to change as the individual experiences their social world.

Based on Blumer's (1969) three premises, Symbolic Interactionism allows the researcher to view people in society and their conduct. The approach views meanings as social products formed when people engage in a process of ongoing activity and interactions in different situations. In this research study, the participants are a group of climbers who regularly climb together and interact with meaningful objects within changing situations. A Symbolic Interactionist theoretical framework will be used to understand how the

participants create a world of meaningful objects which are developed in the process of social interactions within the setting. The interpretation of these interactions will then be used to reveal the place meanings of indoor rock climbers. The concept of Place will now be discussed.

2.3 Place

Tuan (1977) describes place as a centre of meaning constructed by experience. While, Kyle and Chick (2007) build on this by suggesting that places are symbolic contexts imbued with meaning. This implies that meaning is not inherent to a place but rather constructed by people's interactions and subsequent interpretations of a place (Main, 2013). Over time these interactions can make a strange, unknown space become a familiar place filled with meaning (Tuan, 1977). These meaningful experiences are not restricted to any particular place, nor to any particular emotion or experience (Manzo, 2005). As such the place may be of different spatial scale, for example a residence, local community, neighbourhood, city, region, or country. Places do not need to be extraordinary, such as award-winning design or fame, they can be ordinary places experienced in everyday life (Manzo, 2005). Places can therefore be portrayed as "an environmental whole in which people and place are intimately interconnected" (Seamon, 2014, p. 13). Although many people often use the same places, each individual perceives and conceives them differently through a unique frame of knowledge, values, ambitions and memories which lends every place a distinctive meaning (Roult, Adjizian. and Auger, 2016). Consequently, places do not necessarily mean the same thing to everybody. People's feelings for a place also shift over time (Seamon, 2014), becoming a life-long phenomenon that develops and transforms. Past experiences in the same place influence people's current relationships with that place, and even past experiences in a previous place can influence place relationships in a new place (Manzo, 2005). Relatedly, Gustafson (2001) refers to the 'temporal dimension' where place becomes connected to the life path of the individual in which places may be regarded as processes. For example, the process of reproducing existing meanings as well as the creation of new ones.

In finding the meanings that places have in people's lives, it validates important aspects of the human experience. For example, Manzo (2005) suggests that people's emotional relationships to places represent people's ever-growing identity and self-awareness

because places provide opportunities for self-development. Places can also have restorative effects by allowing people to escape from one's usual routine and engage in activities that are entertaining or that satisfy one's goals (Main, 2013). Here it would be useful to address the indoor sport place in general to greater understand the place of indoor rock climbing specific to this research.

2.4 Indoor sport places

Kramer et al. (2015) researched sports participation among adults in the Netherlands at three specific sports places: sports at indoor sports clubs, outdoor sports clubs, and sports on streets. The results showed that indoor sports clubs were over three times more popular than sports at both outdoor sports clubs and on streets. While another study from the Netherlands by Deelen, Ettema and Dijst (2016) found that sports participation in indoor sport facilities were more than twice as popular as outdoor sports facilities. These two studies demonstrate the greater popularity of indoor sport venues when compared to outdoor sport venues. In addition to this, most, if not all traditional outdoor sports can now be undertaken within an indoor environment with minimal adaption to the rules and regulations. This is described as the "indoorisation of outdoor sports" (van Bottenburg and Salome, 2010, p. 143). This includes adventure sports such as outdoor rock climbing, surfing, rafting, skydiving and even parachute jumping that have previously only been accessed within natural, often wild environments.

These indoor venues that cater for such outdoor adventure sports have allowed a greater opportunity for the public to access these sports in a safe, predictable and controlled setting (van Bottenburg and Salome, 2010). The indoor environment provides a convenient location, protection from the weather, and a comfortable experience that can also be enjoyed year-round, at any time of the day, making it a reliable setting for its users (Eden and Barratt, 2010). Access to these indoor sport venues is at a relatively low cost and can be tried just once giving them an "accessible character" (van Bottenburg and Salome, 2010, p. 153) by preventing the exclusion of users who do not wish to invest significant funds or time into it. An example of an indoor sport venue that caters for a sport that was traditionally only accessed outdoors is the indoor rock climbing venue and the focus of this research. This next section will address the past and present status of the sport of indoor rock climbing.

2.5 Indoor rock climbing

The first indoor rock climbing wall in the United Kingdom (UK) was built in 1960 at Ullswater School in Penrith, in the North of England. It was during the 1970's that the UK saw the commercial development of indoor climbing walls. Their initial purpose was as a training facility for experienced outdoor climbers during the off-season to maintain strength, practice climbing technique (Zimmerman, 2008; Kulczycki and Hinch, 2014), and to use as a rainy-day alternative (Eden and Barratt, 2010). Nowadays, the clientele has changed fundamentally. Although indoor rock climbing venues are still used by experienced climbers, people are not necessarily viewing it as a path that takes them to outdoor climbing pursuits like mountaineering, but rather they see it as a sport in its own right (Zimmerman, 2008; Barratt, 2011). Furthermore, it is part of the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) which is the national representative body for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers in England and Wales.

Indoor rock climbing facilities are unrecognisable from the original bolted holds that were fitted into cemented walls in the 1960's (Mittelstaedt, 1997). They have now become increasingly more sophisticated in design, using sculptured resin to replicate real rock crags in appearance and feel (Eden and Barratt, 2010), with interchangeable holds allowing climbing routes to be changed regularly. In addition, climbers can encounter similar holds, cracks, overhangs, chimneys, slabs, roofs and other features that can be found at a natural climbing area (Mittelstaedt, 1997). Indoor rock climbing walls are mostly located at dedicated venues, but can also be found in public sports centres, universities, schools and even shopping centres.

These venues allow indoor rock climbers to train at a greater intensity than ever before (Barratt, 2011), are easily accessed in regions that do not have any natural climbing areas nearby (Mittelstaedt, 1997) and requires minimal kit (Eden and Barratt, 2010). The functional benefits of these venues provide climbers with accessible all-weather climbing (Barratt, 2011), are heated, include social spaces such as cafés and are highly managed in regard to health and safety standards; where the majority of risks are removed or designed out (Eden and Barratt, 2010). Climbers of varying abilities are able to experience challenge, co-operation and positive social interactions in a controlled setting (Kulczycki and Hinch, 2014). While Jones, Asghar and Llewellyn (2008) focused on the injury risks associated with

indoor rock climbing activities, Mittelstaedt (1997) reported on its health benefits such as improved physical and mental health. Further studies have shown how indoor rock climbing has been used as a therapy treatment for depression (Luttenberger et al., 2015; National Health Service (NHS), 2017), dyspraxia (NHS, 2017) and cerebral palsy (Makarczuk and Makarczuk, 2015). Indoor rock climbing can also be incorporated within physical education programmes at primary and secondary schools (Department for Education, 2013b). For the safe supervision and management of indoor climbing activities, accredited courses are provided by the Mountain Training Association (MTA). The MTA is the collection of awarding bodies for skills courses and qualifications in walking, climbing and mountaineering in the UK and Ireland. They offer indoor climbing instructor courses such as the Climbing Wall Award (CWA) for people to supervise climbing, bouldering and abseiling on artificial structures (MTA, 2017).

Climbing activities have seen a considerable increase in popularity over time. The Active People Survey 10 (Sport England, 2016) reports that there were 110,200 adults (16 years and over) who participated in 'mountaineering' (climbing indoor, climbing rock, mountaineering, mountaineering high altitude, hill trekking, hill walking, bouldering, mountain walking) once a week between October 2015 and September 2016. This is an increase of 29% (from 85,100) from the previous year, and up from 67,000 in the same time period 10 years ago. This rise in participation can be linked to the growth of indoor climbing facilities in England and Wales. There has been a 16% increase in the number of indoor climbing walls recorded by the BMC, from 333 in 2012 to 386 walls in 2016 (BMC, 2011; BMC, 2015).

Climbing competitions are also popular in indoor facilities. There are local, national and international events for lead climbing, speed climbing and bouldering. The BMC runs national and international competitions in the UK yearly. These range from youth-only events to the senior national championships including the Para Climbing Series (BMC, 2017). In 2016 the landscape of indoor rock climbing changed significantly when Sport Climbing was declared a new Olympic sport for the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo, Japan (BMC, 2016). The event will include three climbing disciplines: lead climbing, speed climbing and bouldering. Each competing nation will have a male and female representative competing across all three disciplines. This will display the sport of indoor rock climbing on the biggest global sports stage.

The rationalised nature of indoor rock climbing was researched by Eden and Barratt (2010). They suggest that due to the comfort, convenience and consistency of the indoor rock climbing venue it has meant that the experience is less about personal expression and sensations, and more about consumerist expectations. Eden and Barratt (2010) compare indoor climbing walls to supermarkets to highlight the moral ordering of leisure behaviour and how such indoor leisure spaces reflect modernist domestication and control. For example, they suggest that indoor rock climbers are controlled by safety systems that require them to pass the safety requirements to prove they are competent to use the climbing equipment. While predictable climbing routes allow indoor rock climbers to focus on improving specific climbing techniques, such as small holds to develop finger strength or larger overhanging holds for upper body strength (Eden and Barratt, 2010). Furthermore, van Bottenburg and Salome (2010) agree that indoor settings are part of a rationalised service, and that “indoor practitioners...inescapably embrace the elements of control, predictability and calculability” (p. 144).

Indoor sport venues have been viewed as having a calculated character as opposed to the uncertainty and danger associated with the outdoor adventure setting (van Bottenburg and Salome, 2010). Heywood (1994) further states that the rationalisation of rock climbing activities presents “a threat to the expressive potential of recreation” (p. 181). While Breivik (2010) continues that rational control is at the core of modern society. This notion that rationalisation is controlling modern life harks back to Weberian sociology and the “iron cage of rationality” (Ritzer, 2008, p. 548). Ritzer (2008) claims that people are being imprisoned by pressures of modern life and as a result are progressively unable to express their most human characteristics. Heywood (2006) also adds that the rationalised adventure experience “has the tendency to become routine, normal, measured, predictable...and in general...largely commodified” (p. 461).

Eden and Barratt (2010) used Ritzer’s (2008) concept of ‘McDonaldization’ as part of their study about indoor rock climbing walls. McDonaldization is the process by which the principles of the American fast-food restaurant are dominating more and more sectors of American society, as well as the rest of the world. There are five dimensions to the concept of McDonaldization; efficiency, calculability, predictability, control, and the irrationality of rationality. These dimensions have been paraphrased from Ritzer (2008):

1. Efficiency: Customers expect to acquire and consume their meals efficiently.

2. Calculability: There is an emphasis on quantity, often to the detriment of quality. For example, the importance on service speed can adversely affect the quality of the work from the employee and also the quality of the dining experience for the customer.
3. Predictability: Products, settings, employee and customer behaviour are predictable from one geographic setting to another.
4. Control: Technologies such as the automatic french-fry machines control the employees by dictating to the employee when the fries are ready when a bell rings. This in turn also controls the service because it makes it impossible for the customer to request fries that are any different to how the machine makes them, for example well-done or well-browned.
5. The irrationality of rationality: Paradoxically, rationality seems to often lead to irrationality. The efficiency of the service is often replaced with long lines of people at the counters.

Eden and Barratt (2010) suggest that this rationalisation of provision also exists within the indoor sports environment, and that the control and calculability of these indoor services is a threat to freedoms of movement and emotion. They continue that due to the association that these indoor environments have with consumerism, it is seen as a shallow, disengaged, passive and lazy way of engaging with the world. Finally, they suggest that rather than a personalised and embodied practice, the experience is sanitised, processed, socially enforced and boring (Eden and Barratt, 2010). Therefore, this research will investigate whether these meanings associated with the indoor rock climbing venue are constructed through the experiences that the participants have at this place. This leads the review to the next section which clarifies how the concepts of place meaning and place attachment can be used as a way of exploring people's experiences in places.

2.6 Place meaning

Place meaning is a concept used to make symbolic statements about the nature or content of a place (Stedman et al., 2014). These meanings can be adjectival descriptors, such as my neighbourhood is friendly, to highly symbolic, such as this is home (Stedman et al., 2014). Hence, place meanings develop from an array of emotions through the lived experiences in a place (Manzo, 2005; Main, 2013). Place meanings are constructed through a person's

interaction with the material environment, and with other social actors (Kyle and Chick, 2007; Stedman et al., 2014). This aligns with Gustafson's (2001) analytical framework for the understanding of what makes places meaningful. His three-poled triangular model includes: 1) Self, 2) Others, and 3) Environment. Due to the nature of this three-poled model, meanings can be found within the interaction between these three themes. For example, the interaction between the poles of 'self and others' can construct social relations between people and a sense of community. While the interaction between the poles of 'environment and self' offers people the opportunity to perform certain activities within an environment and to feel or experience something desirable (Gustafson, 2001). To summarise, people's place meanings are influenced by the physical setting and by the people at the place. Consequently, this physical and social influence will help to build the research questions to reveal the place meanings within this study. Place meanings develop from the significant attachments that are formed between people and places. This concept is known as place attachment which will be explained in the following section.

2.7 Place attachment

Place attachment is the emotional bonds that people form with places (Altman and Low, 1992). People become attached to the symbols that they attribute to places and seek to maintain meanings that they cherish and which produce attachment (Stedman et al., 2014). Place attachment is fundamentally the evaluative process relating to meanings (for example, "I love this place"). In this sense, place attachment is closely associated with the concept of place meanings because it is the place meanings that reveal the attachment bond that individuals form with these places and are the symbols on which attachment rests (Stedman et al., 2014). To enable a detailed and thorough investigation into a place, place attachment can be compartmentalised into dimensions including place dependence, place identity and social bonding. In this investigation these dimensions will be used within the larger interrelated structure of place meaning and will be explained below.

2.7.1 Place dependency

Place dependency is another dimension of place attachment that like place identity, is based on the individual level, and indicates the functional utility of a place to facilitate

desired leisure experiences (Williams et al., 1992). As a result there is an attachment to the dependence on a place to provide the desired activities and experiences that satisfies the needs of the individual which cannot be found at any other place, hence place dependence is functional (Budruk and Wilhelm Stanis, 2013).

2.7.2 Place identity

Place identity is the contribution of places to one's self-identity (McClinchey, 2017). When a place is viewed as an essential part of a person's identity, it results in a strong emotional attachment to the place (Williams et al., 1992). Seamon (2014) adds to this by suggesting that people come to feel a part of a place and associate their personal and group identity with the identity of that place. It becomes integral to a person's personal and communal identity and self-worth (Seamon, 2014). Further to this, it is based on our symbolic dependence on a place and serves as a meaning-making function about who we are (Mihaylov and Perkins, 2014). In this sense, the dimension of place identity is similar to Rowles' (1983, cited in Chaudhury, 2008) notion of "autobiographical insideness" (p. 13). This is where one projects a sense of self into places of significance which creates a place that reminds one of one's identity (Chaudhury, 2008). In their research, Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) defined four essential principles in the relationship between place and self-identity. They were; 1) Distinctiveness, 2) Continuity (characteristics of a place that are generic and transferable), 3) Self-esteem and 4) Self-efficacy.

2.7.3 Social bonding

Places also hold important attachments due to the social ties and interactions they foster (Johnson, Glover and Stewart, 2014). The development of meaningful social relationships within a place relates to the third dimension known as social bonding. This is defined as feelings of membership or belongingness within a community involving shared histories, interests and mutual trust (Mihaylov and Perkins, 2014). It is the attachment to the sense of a community at a place that is also known as positive social bonding (Mihaylov and Perkins, 2014). The term "social insideness" (Rowles, 1983, cited in Chaudhury, 2008, p. 13) has also been used to describe the experience of feeling like an integral part of the community through the social relationships and exchanges.

By using the place identity, place dependency and social bonding dimensions of place attachment within this research, it will widen the scope of human-place bonding. This will make the investigation into place meanings at an indoor rock climbing venue more comprehensive and definable by reflecting on a more specific association with the place (McClinchey, 2017). The three dimensions also target Gustafson's (2001) three poles of; 1) Self, 2) Others, and 3) Environment. Thus, for the purpose of this research, place meanings will be viewed through the attachments that recreational indoor rock climbers have for their venue. The next section will now examine previous place meaning research.

2.8 Place meaning research

Early research about place meanings had a heavy focus on the relationships to residential settings (Horwitz and Tognoli, 1982; Moore, 2000). Since then, place meaning research has explored people's relationships in an array of non-residential places. This has made an important contribution to the understanding of people's relationships to a variety of places and how these places can enrich our lives and our sense of self. The literature for this review was selected based on the commonalities they share with the experiences at the indoor rock climbing venue. As a result, the following place meaning research is focused on every-day places within the wider community, recreational and leisure places, sport places and the indoor sport place. These studies will be used to understand how the lived experience within such places develop important human-place attachments and place meanings.

2.8.1 Wider community places

In a place study within the wider community, Manzo (2005) researched the lived experience of 40 participants (25 to 35 years of age) in the New York metropolitan area to explore the nature of their emotional relationship to the places in their lives. She used grounded theory with a phenomenological perspective, and conducted in-depth interviews with the participants. Manzo's (2005) research revealed the types of places that are meaningful to people, the role these places play in their lives and the processes by which they develop meaning. Findings showed the diversity and richness of people's emotional relationships to places, indicating that place meanings develop from an array of emotions

and experiences. In addition, findings revealed that place meanings were influenced by socially constructed identities, showing how people's gender, race, class and sexuality were found to affect people's emotional relationships to places (Manzo, 2005). Manzo (2005) suggests how people carve out their own niches and places that provide an important sense of belonging and social connectedness. Relph (1976, cited in McClinchey, 2017) describes this as a feeling of "insiderness" (p. 396), which is when people feel at one with a place and have deep experiences with it.

Manzo (2005) found that the participant's meaningful places were widely varied. Some were outdoors (for example, beaches, parks and lakes), others were indoors (for example, churches, bars, laundrettes and airports). Some were tiny niches (for example, a cupboard, a hallway in a grandmother's apartment, and the landing at the top of a staircase). In these intimate places came feelings of enclosure, safety, warmth and imagination. Findings also revealed that places can provide negative experiences, such as a sense of threat and exclusion (Manzo, 2005). This finding of exclusion in a place is what Relph (1976, cited in McClinchey, 2017) describes as a feeling of "outsiderness" (p. 396) when people feel alienated or perceive a place as little more than the background or setting for activities. It is Manzo's (2005) focus on these negative place findings that set this research apart from other place meaning research of its time. Prior to this, people's relationship to places were most commonly explored through positive experiences. Therefore, both positive and negative place findings will be investigated within this research study.

Furthermore, Manzo (2005) discovered that it was not simply the places themselves that are significant, but rather what can be called "experience-in-place" (p.74) that creates meaning. This experience-in-place takes both the physical location and the nature of the experience as the fundamental unit of analysis, recognising that each is inextricably bound to the other. It is the experience-in-place, rather than the simple descriptions of the physical setting of a place that is meaningful. While Tuan (1977) adds that "the quality and intensity of experience matters more than simple duration" (p.198). With this in mind, these principles will be used to provide important scope for place meanings at the indoor rock climbing venue due to the broad range of physical and social experiences that take place there.

2.8.2 Recreational and leisure places

Drawing on a recreational place meaning study by Kyle and Chick (2007), the experience-in-place principle was also the significant focus. Yet, where Manzo's (2005) study incorporated many places within a vast community, Kyle and Chick (2007) focused on a single site. They investigated the place meanings of recreationists at an agricultural encampment and fair (farming festival with camping and a funfair). Data was collected through interviews using a photo-elicitation technique and participant observations. Kyle and Chick (2007) found that place meanings were the product of interactive processes involving the individual, their social world and the physical setting. They continue that the most significant interactions were specific place experiences shared with family and close friends, and were largely independent of the physical attributes that defined the setting (Kyle and Chick, 2007). This showed that the place meanings were grounded in experiences of social bonding, while less significant were the physical features that comprised the setting. This was an interesting finding that influenced the development of the research questions for this study to explore this area at the indoor rock climbing venue. The framework of Symbolic Interactionism used by Kyle and Chick (2007) also proved an effective way of exploring meanings and is adopted by this research to reveal the place meanings of recreational indoor rock climbers.

Main (2013) sheds further light on how a recreational space can be an important site in the construction of place meanings. She explored the place-based meanings of an urban public space called MacArthur Park through interviews, photo-elicitation techniques and field observations. The park was in a Latino and immigrant neighbourhood in Los Angeles, California. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis revealed that a complex array of place meanings were associated with the park. The research revealed that positive place meanings were related to identity, community, restoration, safety, and freedom (Main, 2013). Park users were able to relax, be entertained, and escape their everyday lives. Though, similar to Manzo's (2005) earlier findings, experiences were not all positive. Participants discussed negative experiences in the park that were disturbing (for example, poor maintenance and condition), and sometimes frightening (for example, crime and conflict). Furthermore, a sense of loneliness and isolation was revealed when they were reminded of the communities they had come from (Main, 2013).

Place identity arose as a central theme of this study and it was clear that the park supported identity through both its social space and physical qualities, such as its natural elements. The park was a place where participants felt free to be themselves and they spoke of feeling physically or psychologically better because of the park's tranquillity and restfulness (Main, 2013). Main's (2013) findings are similar to Kyle and Chick's (2007) study in that place meanings were found to be the product of interactive processes involving the individual, their social world and the physical setting. Though, where Kyle and Chick (2007) found that the interactions with family and close friends were largely independent of the physical attributes that defined the setting, Main (2013) found that the physical design of the park enhanced social interactions and encouraged a sense of community. These two findings indicate that it is important for this research to focus on both the physical and social interactions at the indoor rock climbing venue and how these interactions can both influence one another and construct meanings that are independent of one another.

Similar findings to Main (2013) were revealed in a study by Johnson, Glover and Stewart (2014), who found that the physical features in a downtown area of Kitchener, Ontario in Canada encouraged social interactions and facilitated leisure activities. Johnson, Glover and Stewart (2014) examined everyday forms of urban leisure and their relationship with place-making initiatives. Twenty-one local residents participated in the study and similar to the photo-elicitation techniques that were used by Main (2013) and Kyle and Chick (2007), they were asked to photograph meaningful landscapes in the downtown area. After the photographs were collected, they were then used during the interviews to help understand the meaning of these urban spaces. Johnson, Glover and Stewart (2014) revealed that the physical features in the downtown area such as parks, playgrounds, civic squares, chess tables and benches were highlighted for their roles in enhancing unique social interactions. This was central to the residents creating a sense of place that contributed to a vibrant downtown area. It was also revealed how visual assurances of positive social interactions were significant to the acceptance of a space as welcoming or comfortable (Johnson, Glover and Stewart, 2014). These studies have illustrated the value of both physical and social interactions in constructing important meanings for places. The findings from these studies have revealed that it is not simply the objective place that was significant but rather the personal experience-in-place (Manzo, 2005). When people have

experiences in places, this allows them to create and accumulate place meanings over time.

Further research on urban leisure in Canada examined the role multicultural festivals play in contributing to a sense of place for migrants (McClinchey, 2017). McClinchey (2017) draws on data from two urban multicultural festivals in Ontario; the Multicultural Festival in Kitchener, and the Carassauga Festival in Mississauga. Unlike the participants in Kyle and Chick's (2007) research study who travelled to the agricultural fair and camped for up to ten days, the majority of visitors to these multicultural leisure festivals were day-trippers who lived a short distance away either in the same city, town or neighbourhood as the festival. These visitors were still found to have meaningful experiences during their time at these festivals regardless of the duration of their visit. The emotional and sensuous experiences of the festivals were found to contribute to the migrants' sense of place, belonging and identity both towards their settlement in Canada as well as towards their country of origin. The festivals also contributed towards identity work for the youth, keeping them active and busy, and teaching them their ethnic traditions and social bonding (McClinchey, 2017).

Hixon's (2013) research focused on place identity and examined the role that leisure activities have in terms of young people's identity and feelings towards their place of residence in Adelaide, Australia. The study used a mixed methods approach consisting of semi-structured focus groups conducted with 24 senior high school students, followed by a survey of 226 respondents. The participants were aged between 16 and 18 years of age. The results indicated that playing sport has the greatest impact on young people's place identity, and that their engagement in these activities can lead to greater attachment to a place (Hixon, 2013). Similar to the findings by McClinchey (2017), Hixon (2013) revealed a sense of social belonging was established among people with similar interests which translated into an increased sense of place and attachment. This was shown to enhance social bonding due to the shared experiences and connections that leisure participation can facilitate (Hixon, 2013).

2.8.3 Sport places

The influence of sport in the establishment of place meanings was researched by Kulczycki (2014) in a study about outdoor rock climbers. Similar to Main (2013) and Manzo (2005), place meanings were found to develop from both positive and negative experiences. For example, social interactions 'within' climbing groups were seen as positive experiences. The inner-group social bonding provided support and motivation for their members to climb in a friendly atmosphere. Whereas, negative social interactions were experienced 'between' different climbing groups that involved concern over crowded routes, erosion of solitude, and site overuse (Kulczycki, 2014). Hence, climbing places were a site for place meanings that included both positive social bonding and negative social avoidance. Similarly, in Dant and Wheaton's (2007) research on the material and embodied interaction in windsurfing, they discuss the culture within the sport and the distinction between being an insider and outsider. Though unlike Kulczycki's (2014) findings, acceptance into this group is said to be based on a windsurfer's embodied performance and experience, giving them an exclusive social identity. According to Dant and Wheaton (2007), acquiring and displaying bodily skill is part of an induction into a community of those who share the skill.

While the previous place literature has focused on the construction of place meaning as a situated and contemplative experience of a place, the following place meaning research examines the experience of mobility in a place. Spinney (2006) suggests that "mobility should be central to the ways in which we conceptualise and understand the character and meanings of different spaces and places" (p.709). His ethnographic research focused on the experiences of racing and touring cyclists on Mont Ventoux in France, and suggests that the physical engagement with a place creates meaning and identity. Thus, what defines Mont Ventoux as a place is the cycling activity undertaken within it and the embodied sensations generated by this activity. By the environment dictating the movement, Spinney (2006) explored the notion that "movements in and through a place define our engagement with it and help constitute it as a place" (p.709). Consequently, meaning is created in and through the movement of the cycling ascent.

The movement experience described in Spinney's (2006) research is dependent on a bicycle; without this piece of equipment the engagement and subsequent meaning of a place is affected. Spinney (2006) states that "the conjoining of the person and bike and the

resulting embodied rhythms and kinaesthetic sensations of the movement of cycling are constitutive of the character and meanings of particular places” (p.709). This highlights how both the bicycle and rider become inseparable from each other in the ascent of Mont Ventoux. Spinney (2006) refers to this human and equipment mobility as “hybrid rhythms” (p.717). Similarly, Barratt (2011) draws on “human-technological hybrids” (p.397) in his research about rock climbing and argues that climbers are more-than-human fusions. For example, he proposes that the use of items such as climbing shoes, indoor climbing walls and bouldering mats are all part of the hybrid climbing assemblage (Barratt, 2011). In a later study about relations between climbers, their kit and the places in which they climb, Barratt (2012) suggests how repeated engagements between climbers and their kit develops familiarity, providing comfort and support. The climber and kit enters into a symbolic and synergist relationship that co-enables the climb. Barratt (2012) continues that climbers develop close emotional relationships with their kit and that climbers experience places not only as bodies but as complex assemblages. This final point by Barratt (2012) aligns with Spinney (2006) that understanding these hybrid forms is “fundamental in rethinking how people live, feel, and ultimately create meaningful spatial relations” (p.709). Like ascending Mont Ventoux on a bicycle, the climbing body becomes inseparable from the equipment and climbing environment.

Spinney (2006) found that of all the sensations when ascending Mont Ventoux, pain and suffering are the most commonly talked about amongst riders. He proclaims that “pain is the currency and language of ascent, not simply because riders read about it in magazines or see the professionals in pain but because it is exertion that dictates the experience of riding a bike, and particularly of riding hard” (p.727). Yet, unlike the unwanted negative place experiences previously reported by Manzo (2005) and Main (2013), the experience of pain and suffering was seen by the riders as necessary and that the greater the suffering, the greater the pleasure. Although, Spinney (2006) is clear in his opinion that pain does not equate to pleasure, rather it is the successful control and rationing of pain in achieving a goal which may be viewed retrospectively as pleasure.

Another place experience that is also about successful control when achieving a challenging goal is Csikszentmihalyi’s (1975, cited in Dant and Wheaton, 2007) concept of flow. Though, rather than the successful control of pain, the concept of flow is about the successful control of a challenging situation that causes a deep sense of enjoyment. According to

Csikszentmihalyi (2002, cited in Hardie-Bick and Bonner, 2015), flow is “the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it” (p. 374). The principle of flow includes the following components: opportunities for action, feelings of competence and control, deep involvement and concentration, a merging of action and awareness, a sense of time being altered, a loss of self-consciousness and the emergence of a stronger sense of self upon completion (Hardie-Bick and Bonner, 2015). To remain in a state of flow it is necessary to increase the complexity of the activity by developing sufficient skills and taking on new challenges (Hardie-Bick and Bonner, 2015).

Similar to Spinney’s (2006) cyclists, the positive emotions experienced during flow such as pleasure, exhilaration and ecstasy are typically experienced in retrospect of the activity (Seligman, 2002). People can lose themselves in an activity in this state of flow and later testify that it is their happiest frame of mind (Brown, 2016). Although, if a person’s skills outweigh the challenges they face or if the challenges become too great to achieve, then flow is lost (Brown, 2016). This links to a place dependency of the environment to facilitate the desired level of challenge for flow to occur. Interestingly, Csikszentmihalyi (1990, cited in Breivik, 2010) found flow experiences among rock climbers, chess players, music composers and surgeons. Hence, experiences of flow can be achieved from a diverse range of challenging activities that can produce a heightened sense of self, a personal sense of control and self-determination (Hardie-Bick and Bonner, 2015). Positive experiences of self were also found in windsurfers who took pleasure in intrinsic factors such as challenging themselves (Dant and Wheaton, 2007). Similarly, Heywood (1994) proposes that experiences of satisfaction in outdoor rock climbing was intrinsic rather than extrinsic. He suggests that the aim is focused on the climbing process rather than getting to the top. These findings about the self and intrinsic experiences aligns with the concept of place identity.

According to Spinney (2006), the experiences of movement and mobility are as relevant to identity and belonging as any historical and fixed notions of dwelling. This has been enlightening for this research study due to the physical nature of the indoor rock climbing movement and the influence this can have on place meanings. Yet, Spinney (2006) has only focused on the unmediated physical experiences of a place and lacks the influence that the social world can have on place meanings. Thus, the following study focuses on both the

physical and social influences of the place experience. In a climbing specific study, Dutkiewicz (2015) researched outdoor rock climbers in America. In his ethnographic study he looked at how eight sport climbers engaged with a rock climb called Pretzel Logic. Modern sport climbing takes place on real rock that has been officially prepared, which means that the rock has been officially 'cleaned' by having its loose pieces removed, along with plant life and dust brushed off. Bolts are then drilled into the rock face at regular intervals for climbers to clip-in their protective gear. In many ways the physical environment is similar to Mont Ventoux as both involve the ascending of a natural environment that has been adapted to allow for the physical movements of the activity. For example, on Mont Ventoux roads have been built to cycle on, while on Pretzel Logic bolts have been placed on the rock face for climbing up. Again, like Spinney's (2006) notion that mobility should be central to the meanings of a place, Dutkiewicz (2015) builds on this view and suggests that the rock face is an object that cannot be thought of in static terms, but rather it exists in the ways climbers engage with and experience it. Using a phenomenological approach to study the climbing experience, he suggests there is a physical relationship between the climber and the rock face. The climber and rock face engages in what Dutkiewicz (2015) refers to as "mutual constitution" (p.27). Similar to the hybrid forms of Spinney (2006) and Barratt (2011) he refers to the climber and climb as a highly fluid actor-object engagement. Through this highly personal interaction with the rock the climbers gained knowledge of the rock climb, and although it was the same climb, each person ascended it differently and experienced the climb as a "unique haptic-kinaesthetic event" (Dutkiewicz, 2015, p.36).

Dutkiewicz (2015) continues that through the act of climbing, knowledge is gained in large part through the body, and specifically through the fingertips. He suggests that a climber must learn the climb through sight, speech, touch and movement to successfully navigate it. Similarly, Rowles (1983, cited in Chaudhury, 2008) uses the term "physical insideness" (p. 13) to describe the experiential familiarity with the environment in creating an awareness of the physical features of a place. Dutkiewicz (2015) findings are also aligned with Lewis' (2000) account of the climbing body that suggests "it is the sensitivity of our hands that is responsible for relaying so much of our knowledge of the world around us" (p.71). Lewis (2000) continues that the kinaesthetic movement "is the total embodied awareness of a body in an environment" (p.71). Dutkiewicz (2015) concludes that the rock

face exists somewhere between brute, rocky tangibility and social product. It is established by its relations with climbers, and the relationships it allows between groups of climbers and between climbers and rocks (Dutkiewicz, 2015). Dutkiewicz (2015) study is relevant to this research due to the focus of interactions with the physical and social objects of a climbing place, while also featuring a small sample size. However, it does lack any reference to specific place meaning concepts which is the focus of this research on indoor rock climbers.

The following study explores the place meanings of touring skiers in Quebec, Canada. Roullet, Adjizian and Auger (2016) researched the attachments that touring skiers have with their practice sites. The skiing practices included cross-country skiing, ski-skating and Nordic skiing. The researchers adopted a quantitative approach using a web-based questionnaire survey of 50 closed-ended questions that was completed by 829 people who were 18 years or over and had taken part in ski activities during the previous year before the data collection. They found that touring skiers place bonds were influenced by their individual profiles such as ski experience and specific ski activity. This shows that although people share the same places, each individual perceives and conceives them differently. For example, touring skiers who had at least twenty years' experience suggested that essential factors included difficulty, variety and quality relating to the trails, as well information about weather forecasts. Similarly, ski-skaters were specifically selective regarding trail quality, large trail networks, degrees of difficulty and advantageous pricing for their season pass. These skiers chose sites for practical purposes, showing a sense of place that is linked to functional purposes where the user seeks as much control over the environment as possible (Roullet, Adjizian and Auger, 2016). Roullet, Adjizian and Auger (2016) stress that this utilitarian interpretation of a place does not mean that the experience and qualities provided by a place are dismissed. Rather, this functional purpose can be related to an attachment to the place dependency. Other important motivations for experienced skiers included enjoying natural landscapes, visiting unexplored regions and observing wildlife (Roullet, Adjizian and Auger, 2016). Whereas, for beginners and intermediate touring skiers, essential factors included sites that were low cost, easily accessible and family-friendly (Roullet, Adjizian and Auger, 2016). They would travel to the nearest ski centres or trail networks in their region and would highly value the possibility to rent ski equipment from a nearby facility (Roullet, Adjizian and Auger, 2016). These features of accessibility and a low-

cost activity are also shared with the indoor sports venue (Eden and Barratt, 2010; van Bottenburg and Salome, 2010).

Roult, Adjizian and Auger (2016) found that those taking part in the activity of Nordic skiing had a higher interest for pleasing natural landscapes. For these skiers, selecting and visiting a destination brings the important dimension of place authenticity by bonding with the true cultural, physical and social landscape. The issue of authenticity of skiing landscapes was previously addressed by Tivers (1997) in her study about dry ski-slopes. She responded to suggestions that artificial sports landscapes were becoming increasingly artificial, placeless and monotonous. Tivers (1997) argued that dry ski-slopes provided physical skiing experiences that were satisfying and authentic for its users. These findings about the artificial sports landscape prove enlightening due to the similarities that this environment shares with the indoor rock climbing venue. As previously referred to, Eden and Barratt (2010) have also questioned the meaningful experiences in purpose-built recreational sport environments, such as man-made fishing ponds and indoor rock climbing walls. However, in supporting the bonds that people can have with the artificial landscape, Smith and Bugni (2006) use the theoretical perspective of Symbolic Interactionism to understand relationships between humans and their designed environments. They propose that buildings such as sport complexes are environments that do influence our thoughts, emotions, and actions (Smith and Bugni, 2006). Therefore, this suggests that the interactions at the built environment of an indoor rock climbing venue is an important site for human-place bonds.

Roult, Adjizian and Auger (2016) conclude that a skier's experience along with the specific activity they take part in influences the types of bonds that skiers create with their practice environment on both a social and identity level. Each individual skier bonds with the environment according to past events and experiences, all the while searching for authenticity and identification. Some people are bonded to the environment by functional considerations while others by the natural characteristics and landscape attributes (Roult, Adjizian and Auger, 2016). Yet, regardless of the experience levels or specific skiing activity, variety in the ski experience was well sought-after by all touring skiers. This was provided through varied and suitable physical challenges within the ski trail networks to allow skiers to progress and experience opportunities for personal growth (Roult, Adjizian and Auger,

2016). This shows a place dependency towards the ski environment to satisfy the needs of the skiers.

The positive aspect of Roullet, Adjizian and Auger's (2016) research design is the large sample that participated in the study. However, due to the quantitative approach of measuring place attachment, the survey method may result in the questions being misinterpreted, whilst also not being able to verify the participants individual profiles. Therefore, this approach prevented a deeper qualitative understanding of the lived experience and the symbolism that is explicit to place meaning research.

2.8.4 The indoor sport place

Place meaning research within indoor sport places continues to be a highly under researched area. A study by Kulczycki and Hinch (2014) researched place meanings at indoor rock climbing facilities in Western Canada. They interviewed 21 climbers and found the following nine place-based themes emerged: consciously artificial, re-creating nature, accessibility (convenient location), distinct sport, outdoor desires, loyalty (linked to design, layout and operation of indoor facilities), skill development, physical fitness, and camaraderie (the development of an indoor climbing community). These themes are enlightening to how climbers perceive the indoor rock climbing space. They also incorporate the influence of the physical site, the act of climbing, and other people at the facilities. However, this research was part of a larger interpretative study by Kulczycki (2014) about place meanings that compared indoor and outdoor climbing settings using the same sample group. As a result, the 21 participants that were used in Kulczycki and Hinch's (2014) study utilised both outdoor climbing sites and indoor climbing facilities. This meant that the place meanings the participants ascribed to the indoor rock climbing facilities were heavily influenced by the participant's regularly experience of the outdoor rock climbing setting. For example, one of their nine place-based themes were 'outdoor desires'. Therefore, there is an important gap for an investigation into the place meanings of a group of indoor rock climbers that have chosen to remain indoors for the experiences that this venue provides.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter addressed Symbolic Interactionism, the principles of place and the context of the indoor sport space. It then introduced the sport of indoor rock climbing including its past and present status. Place meaning and place attachment concepts were then clarified before reviewing key place meaning research. This review of place meaning literature has revealed the diverse range of places that hold important meanings for people. These places can be ordinary, everyday places such as a bench in a neighbourhood park or a world-renowned cycling landscape such as Mont Ventoux. This review has also shown a broad spectrum of experiences that people have in places through their physical and social interactions. These interactions have revealed subsequent place attachments. For example, it has been revealed that interactions with other people in places can construct significant feelings of belonging in a community, revealing an attachment to the social bonding in a place. While places where people felt free to be themselves or experienced personal growth showed an attachment to a place identity. People were also found to be attached to a dependency of a place to function in a way that would satisfy their needs. Hence, this investigation into place meanings offers an important insight into people's lived experiences.

This literature review has revealed a gap in place meaning research about a group of indoor rock climbers who have chosen to remain indoors for the experiences that these venues provide. It has also highlighted the lack of place meaning literature within other indoor sport places. Consequently, this research study will investigate the place meanings of recreational climbers at an indoor rock climbing venue. The research questions for this investigation are:

1. What place meanings are constructed from the interactions with the physical indoor rock climbing setting?
2. How does the climbing action construct place meanings?
3. How does the interaction with the social world at the venue construct place meanings?

These research questions have been designed to reflect the factors that have been shown to influence the place meaning experiences highlighted within this literature review. These factors are the physical setting of a place, the mobility within a place and the people at the

place. The researcher believes these research questions will elicit deep and enlightening place meanings of indoor rock climbers. This literature review has provided a context in which the findings from this research can be compared and discussed.

The next chapter will explain the research methodology used for this study. It will aim to justify the research approach undertaken as well as providing descriptions of the participants and the setting. It will also provide details of how the data was collected and analysed.

Chapter 3

Research methodology

3.1 Introduction

Having reviewed the literature and findings from previous indoor rock climbing studies and place meaning research in chapter two, this chapter will address the research methodology that was undertaken within this study. This chapter will explore the epistemological and ontological stances used within this research, the methods of data collection and how the findings were analysed. It will also include details of the participants and the setting within the study. This chapter will detail how these methodological considerations were appropriate in exploring the experiences of recreational indoor rock climbers, as stated by the research questions (see Section 1.3). The following schematic presents the research process:



3.2 Qualitative research

In considering the research questions regarding the lived experiences of a group of indoor rock climbers, qualitative research was employed within this methodology. According to Bell (2010), this approach provides an understanding of individual's perceptions of the world. While Jones (2015) adds to this by suggesting that qualitative research can "capture meanings or qualities that are not quantifiable, such as feelings, thoughts and experiences" (p. 24). Thus, qualitative research was chosen as the most appropriate approach as it provides an understanding of the participant's experiences and how they create, modify and interpret the world in which they find themselves (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). The principle of understanding how people interpret the world in which they live was central to this study. A qualitative approach explored the realities of the social world allowing place meanings at an indoor rock climbing venue to be revealed. Creswell (2014) suggests that, "the value of qualitative research lies in the particular description and themes developed in context of a specific site" (p. 204).

This qualitative research was underpinned by certain philosophical stances involving the nature of being, known as ontology (Crotty, 1998), and the creation of knowledge, known as epistemology (Neuman, 2011). According to Crotty (1998) research rests on assumptions and principles from these two areas, therefore the following ontological and epistemological viewpoints were mindfully selected for this research methodology. The following sections will first explain the constructionist ontology, followed by the interpretivist epistemology.

3.3 Constructionist ontology

Ontological assumptions are concerned with the very nature or essence of the social phenomena being investigated (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). In light of this, a constructionist ontological stance was adopted for this research to investigate the place meanings of indoor rock climbers. This position takes the view that meaning is constructed through the interaction between human beings and objects in the world, and developed and communicated within a social context (Crotty, 1998). Similarly, Thomas (2016) suggests that people construct meanings from the social situations in which they find themselves and then use this to understand the social world. Thus, in this research, the

indoor rock climbers place meanings were constructed through the physical and social interactions at the venue, and developed and communicated within a social context.

Crotty (1998) proposes that constructionism is the social generation and transmission of meaning. Creswell (2014) continues that these subjective meanings are negotiated socially and formed through the interaction with others. The constructionist perspective views objects in the world to have a dependent existence based on people constructing their own personal meanings about them (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). This constructionist stance is very different from an objectivist one. Where an objectivist stance would see the meaning for objects as fixed and independent of social realities, the constructionist stance would construct meaning through the engagement with the object (Crotty, 1998). For example, an object such as a tree can construct different meanings for people depending upon whether they are a botanist, lumberjack, a poet or a gardener (Blumer, 1969). Blumer (1969) continues “the meaning of objects for a person arises fundamentally out of the way they are defined to him by others with whom he interacts” (p.11). This means that different people may construct meaning in different ways in relation to the same phenomenon.

This perspective that individual meaning is constructed when people engage or interact with phenomenon and is not fixed prior to the encounter was embraced when investigating the research questions about the place meanings of indoor rock climbers. The researcher drew on the individual meaningful experiences that the indoor rock climbers had when interacting with phenomenon at the venue. In order to gain these insights an interpretive perspective was used which will now be discussed.

3.4 Interpretivist epistemology

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2014) suggest that epistemological assumptions concern how knowledge can be acquired and how it can be communicated to other human beings. Central to interpretivism is the understanding of the subjective world of human experience (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2014). Hence, an interpretivist epistemology was used within this research as it gives a better understanding of the subjective experiences that came from the socially constructed place meanings of the indoor rock climbers. This stance was used to collect qualitative data at the indoor rock climbing venue to understand and explain this human and social reality (Crotty, 1998). Interpretative research employs an

approach that assumes an in-depth understanding and deep immersion into the environment of the subject (Thomas, 2016). This involvement allowed the researcher to reveal personal, subjective and unique knowledge about the participants experiences (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2014), and to uncover what Thomas (2013) refers to as “situated knowledge” (p. 144), where knowledge is situated in relations between people.

The researcher was the main instrument to interpret the participants place meanings by explaining and demystifying the social reality through the eyes of the participants (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2014). According to Schraw, Olafson and Vanderveldt (2011) this provides an empathetic understanding of why people act in the way that they do. Thus, in order to interpret the subjective place meanings of the participants, the researcher shared their experiences as a participant observer. This allowed the researcher to fully participate and experience the interactions within indoor rock climbing (Jones, 2015). This gave the researcher an empathetic and contextual understanding of the participant’s actions and emotions (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). It meant that the researcher could use their own values to know what to look for and record significant findings (Jones, 2015).

Creswell (2014) suggests that qualitative researchers recognise that their personal background, culture, and experiences can shape their interpretations of the data. Therefore, researchers must be reflexive in their research through disciplined subjectivity and an acceptance that good bias in research is unavoidable and necessary (Sparkes, 2014). Thomas (2016) adds to this that when presenting an interpretative case study, you should accept your subjectivity and not be ashamed or afraid of it. Thomas (2016) continues that the researcher is an active, not passive agent in acquiring knowledge and therefore has an undeniable position which affects the nature of the observations and the interpretations that they make. For that reason, the researcher embraced the interpretative nature of this research method and accepted the importance of themselves in making interpretations. Thomas (2016), suggests that “it is subjectivity...rather than objectivity, that comes to the fore” (p. 68).

The interpretation of data within this perspective may well differ between researchers (Jones, 2015) but this is an accepted part of qualitative research. It is the singleness of the interpretation and analysis of the evidence that is significant (Thomas, 2016). Interpretative researchers assume that the social world is indivisible, complex and we should study it in its completeness (Thomas, 2016). Therefore, an interpretative approach

avoids the search for a single truth as is the spirit of positivism, and rather it seeks to acknowledge that there are multiple truths (Jones, 2015). In this research, such an approach will facilitate the understanding of the place meanings of the participants and be epistemologically suited to the aims of this research. This interpretative approach will use a Symbolic Interactionism framework to further understand the social construction of meaning at an indoor rock climbing venue. The notion of being able to put yourself in the place of others is at the heart of Symbolic Interactionism (Crotty, 1998).

3.5 Case study design

A case study design allows the researcher to develop an in-depth analysis of a case (Creswell, 2014). The case in this research was the investigation of place meanings for a specific group of recreational indoor rock climbers within its real-life context (Yin, 2003). The case study design was employed due to the interest in the explanation and understanding of this unique and particular case (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). According to Thomas (2016), interpretative research and case study were made for each other since each demands a deep understanding of the multifaceted nature of social situations.

To understand the place meanings of the indoor rock climbers within this case study, the researcher studied the group over a sustained period of time (seven months) (Creswell, 2014). This was key to the case study approach to allow a deeper understanding of the experience (Thomas, 2016) and the environment that the activity occurs within (Jones, 2015). The researcher was able to gain an enriched perspective of the group in a naturally occurring social situation (Smith, 2010). This took place without the need to manipulate or control the situation, such is the need with experimental approaches when subjects are influenced by the controlled situation and may not act as they would do in normal circumstances (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Hence, the researcher focused on how the indoor rock climbers actually operated and how behaviours, events and meanings were shaped (Smith, 2010). According to Thomas (2016), the case study enables the researcher to “get inside” (p. 142) a situation and share the experiences of the participants by using their own knowledge. Therefore, the researcher was clear of the purpose of the study before encountering the group so that any important evidence was recognised during the

study. This way the researcher didn't miss anything relevant and could capture enriched data about the case at every opportunity (Smith, 2010).

As the case study design focuses on a particular and specific case, you cannot generalise the findings to the overall population (Thomas, 2016). In spite of this, Jones (2015) describes how findings from a non-representative group can be transferable and apply to other similar samples within similar settings. For that reason, the findings from this study could be used to provide insightful information for PE teachers and managers who work with similar groups at similar indoor rock climbing settings.

3.5.1 Participant and setting information

This section will provide an understanding of the participant and setting information within this research study. The research focussed on one group of recreational indoor rock climbers who regularly climb together. The participants were purposively selected because they were part of the same group and because of their choice of remaining within the indoor rock climbing venue for the experiences that this environment provides. This is supported by Neuman's (2011) suggestion that purposive sampling is appropriate to select unique cases that are especially informative. The group were also chosen due to the regular social interactions they have with one another at the venue. According to Manzo (2005) the repeated use of a place enables participants to engage in a variety of experiences that add many facets and layers of meaning to those places. This allowed the elicitation of insightful place meanings to come from their indoor rock climbing experience. Although all participants have experienced outdoor rock climbing, it is not this that motivates them to climb indoors. This is what makes them the target group for this research into place meanings at an indoor rock climbing venue. As a group they share the mindset that indoor rock climbing is a sport in its own right and worth doing on its own merit.

The case study was made up of six males (Joe, George, Kevin, Steve, Andy, John) and one female (Alison), and they climbed together at least once a week. There was a broad age range of between 28 and 73 years, and varied levels of climbing experience between them. Further demographic data about the participants is as follows:

- Alison is 43 and she has been regularly indoor rock climbing for nine years. During this time she has participated in very occasional outdoor rock climbing trips with other members of this group but primarily only climbs indoors.
- Joe is 65 and he was first introduced to indoor rock climbing while at school but didn't take it up again regularly until ten years ago. Joe has previous experience climbing outdoors but now chooses to climb indoors. Joe is also a qualified indoor rock climbing instructor.
- George is 73 and he has been regularly indoor rock climbing for nine years. During this time he has taken part in occasional outdoor rock climbing trips with members of this group but principally climbs indoors.
- Kevin is 71 and his climbing experience started in outdoor rock climbing when he was at university in his twenties. However, he didn't climb again until he started indoor rock climbing nine years ago. Since then he has occasionally climbed outdoors with other members of this group but mainly climbs indoors.
- Steve is 59 and he was first introduced to indoor rock climbing nine years ago. Since then he has undertaken occasional outdoor rock climbing trips with others from this group and with members of his family but largely remains indoors. He introduced his son, Andy (see below) to indoor rock climbing.
- Andy is 28 and he was introduced to indoor rock climbing three years ago by his father, Steve (see above). Since then he has undertaken occasional outdoor rock climbing trips with other members of this group but mostly only climbs indoors.
- John is 54 and he has been indoor rock climbing for twelve years. He makes occasional outdoor climbing trips with people from outside of this group but predominantly climbs indoors.

George, Kevin, Steve and Alison had climbed together since meeting in 2008 at an adult education indoor rock climbing course that was run by Joe. Of the other two participants making up the group, Andy joined them five years ago and John 18 months ago. Alison, Steve and Andy were in full-time employment, while Joe, George, Kevin and John were retired. All the participants took part in both top-rope climbing (when the rope passes through a karabiner at the top of the wall) and lead climbing (when the climber clips in to prearranged bolts on the wall as they climb). The researcher's access to this group of climbers was via Joe who ran the indoor rock climbing course that united the majority of

the group. The researcher has known Joe for ten years and classes them as a good friend. Joe acted as a “gatekeeper” (Smith, 2010, p. 201) in enabling the researcher to gain access to those they wished to study. The approval from this well-respected member of the group contributed greatly to the researcher’s acceptance into the climbing group and in gaining the groups trust.

The researcher accompanied Joe for the first time to the site of the study which was an indoor rock climbing venue in South East London. This is where the group have climbed for the past seven years. The researcher was introduced to the rest of the group and they were all made aware of the researcher’s interest in studying them. The venue is classed as a large climbing facility with many types of walls including slabs, overhangs and bouldering areas. It also has a training room for practicing climbing techniques and a café facility.

3.5.2 Ethics

Jones (2015) stated that research design should be socially and morally acceptable. To ensure this was the case in this study, ethical consideration for the participants was central to this research. Participants received an information sheet (see Appendix 1) explaining what the research was about and what involvement would be asked of them (Thomas, 2016). Participants were then given the option to take part in the study (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). All participants that were approached agreed to take part and informed consent (see Appendix 2 for a copy of the consent form) was given by them (Bell, 2010). The participants were made aware of their right to withdraw at any time if they wished to (Jones, 2015). Full contact details of the researcher and their institutional affiliation was also provided to the participants (Jones, 2015).

Ethics is a continual process (Sparkes and Smith 2014). As a result, throughout the study the researcher maintained an openness with participants about the ongoing procedures. The participants anonymity was assured and when reporting the findings, the participants were assigned a number rather than their real names being used (Jones, 2015). The indoor rock climbing venue was also made anonymous. To ensure participant confidentiality, data was stored securely and password protected (Thomas, 2016). Only the researcher had access to this data and it was only shared with their supervisors at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU). The raw data from the research will be destroyed after the necessary

time frame of this research (Thomas, 2016). Participants understood that findings from the research will be published, though they also had control over removing any details from the study if they wished to. Ethics approval was obtained from CCCU (see Appendix 3).

3.6 Reflexivity

To enhance the trustworthiness of the data this section will reflect on the researcher's role, characteristics, experience and values that they bring to the study. It is accepted that the researcher's background will have an impact upon the data collection and analysis (Jones, 2015). The researcher is a British white male, aged 37 from a working-class background, and previously worked as a secondary school PE teacher at a co-educational high school in Kent for 10 years. It was at this school when the researcher first experienced indoor rock climbing and became a qualified instructor holding the Climbing Wall Award (CWA). Currently the researcher is studying on a full-time Masters degree programme. The researcher's role within this study was as an active participator climbing with the group once a week from March 2017 and continuing to do so post data collection. The climbing group worked in pairs or groups of three, which meant that two or three separate groups climbed together. This was often within the same area close enough to be able to observe between the climbing groups. This allowed good relationships to form with the participants and the researcher soon felt accepted into the group. It also meant that the researcher could experience first-hand the interactions that occur at the indoor rock climbing venue that construct meanings.

The researcher believes that this experience was invaluable in providing reliable interpretations of the participants place meanings. The researcher was always respectful to existing practices of the group and there were never any attempts to interfere with the normal group dynamics. The researcher has never previously been part of a regular indoor rock climbing group, so contextual experiences will be unique to this environment and not taken for granted. The experience of climbing with the group has been an important way of building trust with the participants and so they feel comfortable in revealing their personal experiences and place meanings. The following section will look in more detail at the data collection methods for this research.

3.7 Data collection methods

Researchers collect detailed information for case studies using a variety of data collection procedures (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, the subjective and socially constructed nature of place meanings were captured through the data collection methods of participant observation and semi-structured interviews. The contextual nature, flexibility and conversational style offered by these methods provided the researcher with a better understanding of the place meanings of the participants. The data collected from these methods will allow the researcher to understand what the indoor rock climbing venue means to the participants in relation to their lived experience. The methods provided privileged access for understanding the way the participants acted out and articulated their experiences at the venue over time, which in turn gave insight into the meanings associated with the place. This allowed the case study to be seen in its completeness and from many angles (Thomas, 2016). The following sections will also detail the steps taken that ensured the trustworthiness of the research by using appropriate judgement criteria. Data collection took place from March 2017 to October 2017.

3.7.1 Participant observation

Participant observation, also known as unstructured observation (Thomas, 2016), was used in this research as a data collection method. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), “the social world can only be understood from the standpoint of the individuals who are part of the ongoing action being investigated” (p. 15). Participant observations can reveal characteristics of individuals which would have been impossible to discover by other means (Bell, 2010). Hence, this data collection method gave the researcher personal experience in order to gain important insights into the group dynamics, and to support their interpretation of how the participants construct place meanings. It was also used to identify behaviours that were not even apparent to the participants (Jones, 2015). The researcher was able to use their experience of observation that they gained while being a PE teacher. The skill of identifying behaviours during the physical and social interactions at the indoor rock climbing venue was effectively drawn on during these participant observations.

The participant observations were conducted once a week, and lasted three to four hours. They took place between March and October 2017. This allowed the researcher to collect ongoing data which gave greater insight into the construction of place meanings and also showed any changes of behaviour over this time (Bell, 2010). This method also gave the researcher an insiders role in the indoor rock climbing setting which was important in developing rapport and friendship with the participants (Sands, 2002; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). This meant that the participants were more comfortable and open to discuss their personal experiences and meanings about the place. This relationship with the participants and subsequent openness with the researcher would not have been achieved through other observation methods such as non-participant observation. After all, as Jones (2015) suggests, participant observation uncovers meanings that are not directly observable.

The participant observations were recorded using a field diary (see Appendix 4 for examples of these written accounts). The researcher used an event-contingent approach where entries would be made each time a worthy event occurred (Thomas, 2016). This way the researcher didn't miss or forget relevant data and was able to recall these moments with clarity (Smith, 2010). Nevertheless, there were sometimes challenges in writing these entries due to the physical involvement of the climbing activity. This was expressed by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), who state that the opportunity during fieldwork to take notes can prove disruptive and be perceived as inappropriate or threatening. Considering this, advice by Sparkes and Smith (2014) was adopted by making these notes in reflective down time as soon as possible on the same day. Therefore, between the transitions of climbing routes, the researcher wrote key words in the diary that would then be used as trigger words for further description after the event. The detail of these entries was written up as soon as possible after the observed event to ensure the detail was reliable and not forgotten. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), even the briefest of notes can be valuable in the construction of a more detailed account. These findings were then used to both design personalised interview questions and to validate the interview responses (Bell, 2010).

Jones (2015) suggests that due to the obtrusive nature of participant observation, the researcher may have some effect upon the social environment and the behaviours of the group. Nonetheless, it was felt that this type of observation was the best method to

provide greater understanding of participants place meanings. The researcher felt that the data had greater credibility when collected through participant observations as opposed to less obtrusive methods such as covert observation. The researcher was careful about their own conduct within the group to not alter the behaviours of others in any way, and embraced the benefit of participant observation in building close relationships and co-operation with the participants. This enabled rich place meaning data to be collected. Due to the researcher already knowing one of the participants, the danger of bias was addressed within the participant observations (Bell, 2010). The researcher ensured that this participant was observed without bias within the context of the indoor rock climbing venue, the same way as the other participants, so that no behaviours were overlooked.

3.7.2 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect important data about the participants place meanings as it gave them the opportunity to report on their own thoughts and feelings (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). Each interview used a pre-planned interview guide comprising of a series of open-ended, in-depth questions which covered the following areas: 1) Interactions with the physical indoor rock climbing setting; 2) The experience of the climbing action; and 3) Interactions with the people at the indoor rock climbing venue (see Appendix 5 for interview questions). These areas were used to elicit accounts of the participants climbing experiences in order to give a broad range of physical and social contexts to their place meanings. Personalised interview questions were also included using the data from the participant observations. This provided additional rich findings about the place meanings of the participants because they were able to elaborate on events that had already been recorded in the field notes. This enhanced the level of validity in the participants responses and produced informed data to address the research questions within this study.

The schedule was piloted to test the questions and to increase the confidence of the researcher (Jones, 2015). This was with an avid indoor rock climber unconnected to this research. Before the official interviews, the researcher explained the purpose of the study, the interview procedure and ethical issues such as anonymity, confidentiality and data storage to the participants (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). Participants were not placed under any pressure which meant they were relaxed and happy to co-operate. Consent was given

by each participant to audio-record the interview and they were informed that they could stop the interview at any time. The researcher chose to use audio-recording, as opposed to writing down the responses, to allow for more rapport to develop which resulted in more information being divulged from the participants (Jones, 2015). Questions were grouped and ordered logically, and were also clearly worded, unambiguous and understandable to the participants (Jones, 2015). This meant that questions were not subject to misinterpretation which kept the interviews flowing well.

The interview process was consistent for each participant. The interviews started with some initial “ice-breaker questions” (Sparkes and Smith, 2014, p. 91) to help relax the participants. Although it was during these interviews that the researcher realised how much the involvement within the group as a participant observer had built trust and co-operation. The participants were happy to give up their time and were comfortable to talk openly about the meanings they have towards the indoor rock climbing venue. All seven participants undertook a face-to-face interview that lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. Each interview had been scheduled with the participants a week before and took place between 17th August and 3rd October 2017. The location was chosen so that there were no disturbances (Bell, 2010) and no-one other than the researcher could hear or influence the participant’s responses. To prevent any interview bias from the researcher, such as nodding or shaking their head, neutral body language was also adopted (Jones, 2015). Five out of the seven participants received a shorter follow up interview under the same conditions as described above. This was either due to some additional questions being added after the main interview had taken place or where there was ambiguity in the interview transcripts and clarity was required. The audio-recording for each interview (n = 7) was then fully transcribed verbatim, the following day after the interviews (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). This was to ensure that no data was overlooked. The researcher typed these transcripts by hand (see Appendix 6 for examples of the interview transcripts). The next section will address how the trustworthiness of the research was ensured through judgement criteria for qualitative research.

3.7.3 Judgement criteria for qualitative research

When considering the trustworthiness of quantitative research, judgement criteria includes objectivity, reliability, generalisability and validity. However, in qualitative

research trustworthiness is judged differently. An approach which was founded in the work of Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Guba and Lincoln (1989) proposed the notions of dependability, confirmability, transferability and credibility. These constitute the trustworthiness criteria that can be used to judge the quality of qualitative research in this study.

3.7.3.1 Dependability

In quantitative research, the principle of reliability is one of the most important elements in determining the trustworthiness of research and refers to the consistency, repetition and reproducibility of measures (Sparkes and Smith, 2010). However, in this qualitative research study it is recognised that reliability in the quantitative sense is inappropriate. Reliability is less than relevant to qualitative researchers and can result in severe limits being place on what the qualitative enterprise should include (Sparkes and Smith, 2010). Therefore, concerns over reliability have been dealt with in the form of dependability. According to Sparkes and Smith (2010), for a study to be judged as dependable, it must be consistent and accurate. The researcher has therefore provided detailed descriptions of the research process and the decision making that has occurred in the methodology. This will allow the reader to follow the research process and to make their own judgement about its dependability. According to Jones (2015) this detail would allow other researchers to repeat the same process in a consistent way, even if the findings would not be replicated.

3.7.3.2 Confirmability

Closely linked to the dependability of the research process is its confirmability. This notion is concerned with assuring that the data, interpretations and outcomes have come directly from the contexts and participants of the study and not from any researcher bias (Sparkes and Smith, 2010). Hence, using participant observations was selected to provide trustworthy findings due to the way they allow true behaviours to be observed in real time. It enabled the researcher to see what was actually happening, rather than just being told. This also achieved authenticity from the viewpoint of the participant's social world (Jones, 2015). For Neuman (2011) authenticity refers to a fair, honest and balanced account of social life being studied. The ongoing process of participant observation allowed the

researcher to interpret authentic place meanings which was then used to support and confirm the interview findings. Again, like the notion of dependability, the researcher's decision-making process is made available for inspection and confirmation by outside reviewers of the study (Guba and Lincoln, 1989).

3.7.3.3 Transferability

The qualitative notion of transferability is parallel to the quantitative notion of external validity (Sparkes and Smith, 2010). Although, where external validity allows results to be generalised and expressed with statistical confidence, transferability provides thick description necessary to enable others who may wish to apply the study to situations in which they have an interest (Lincoln and Guba, 1989). The thick descriptions in this study were collected through participant observations and semi-structured interviews. The contextual nature, flexibility and conversational style offered by these data collection methods can be used to provide others with the deep understanding necessary to enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether such a transfer can be contemplated as a possibility (Sparkes and Smith, 2010).

3.7.3.4 Credibility

Credibility relates to how believable the findings and interpretations of a study are (Jones, 2015). To ensure that this study was credible the data collection methods were chosen to accurately reflect the participant's experiences. For example, semi-structured interviews were used due to the flexible approach that allowed participants to discuss their experiences freely as opposed to being kept to a series of rigid questions. It also allowed the researcher to probe for clarification and elaboration about a particular point. This is supported by Jones (2015) who states that the most important questions that you can use are not the initial questions, but the questions you use to follow up the initial response. This allowed the participants to openly discuss and reveal in their own words the meaningful experiences that they had at the indoor rock climbing venue.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation are activities that increase the probability that credible findings will be produced. In this case study prolonged engagement was evident through the researcher studying the group over a seven-month period. This allowed the researcher to understand

the culture within the group. While the persistent observation provided the depth of understanding required to identify the participant's place meanings. Finally, a triangulation of data methods was used to strengthen the credibility of the findings. The rationale of using a triangulation approach is that viewing the phenomenon from several points is more credible than viewing it from just one (Thomas, 2013). Despite this, the researcher was aware that triangulation also had the possibility of increasing error rather than reducing it if one of the data collection sources provided inaccurate data (Jones, 2015). For that reason, data collection methods were chosen that could allow findings to be cross-checked by one another (Bell, 2010). For example, the data collected through interviews was confirmed by the observations and vice versa. This meant that triangulation strengthened the credibility of the findings about the participant's place meanings.

3.8 Data analysis

Data analysis was required to make sense of the data that was collected so that the research questions about the indoor rock climber's place meanings could be addressed (Jones, 2015). This involved a systematic consideration of the data to identify themes and concepts that will contribute to the researchers understanding (Gilbert, 2008). The researcher analysed the transcripts from the semi-structured interviews with the seven participants through a process of coding and developing themes. This process will be explained in the following sections.

3.8.1 Coding

Coding is the process of organising data into labelled categories (Creswell, 2014). According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), coding enables the researcher to identify similar information and retrieve the data in terms of those items that bear the same code. Therefore, as part of this research, participant's narratives were given codes that accurately reflected their place meanings at the indoor rock climbing venue. These codes were words such as challenge, trust and safety (see Appendix 7 for the full list of codes). The codes were distinctly categorised and attached to the data while the interviews were being transcribed as a way of creating categories (Jones, 2015). This coding was the first stage in providing a logical structure to the data and was bracketed and capitalised into

bold type so they would stand out for easy reference at the next stage of the data analysis. The codes were mutually exclusive, with no overlap so that all relevant data could fit into a code of some description (Jones, 2015).

The data analysis didn't include any indication of how frequently the same code was used. In doing so it would have suggested that place meanings that were mentioned more frequently were more important than meanings that were mentioned less often. For this reason, the coding of this data ensured that all place meanings were included in the analysis process. As Jones (2015) suggests, it is the qualitative meaning and importance of the data, rather than the quantitative significance of the data within a code that is important. All relevant data was used so that the interpretations were rooted in the context of the full interview transcripts. The codes that were identified in one interview were compared and contrasted with the other interviews (Gilbert, 2008) and once all the interviews were coded, emerging themes were explored through a thematic analysis.

3.8.2 Thematic analysis

Saldaña (2016) suggests that a theme is an outcome of coding, categorisation, and analytic reflection. In this data analysis, the transcripts of the seven participants were printed onto different coloured paper so when it was physically cut up and sorted into the themed piles, the data could be accurately credited to the right participant. This manual thematic analysis was chosen over the use of CAQDAS (Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software) such as NVivo due to the manageable size of the data set collected for this research (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). As Jones (2015) suggests, manual analysis is not inferior to computer software providing the analysis is carried out correctly. Therefore, to ensure reliability of the data analysis, the coding and thematic analysis followed a standard procedure as stated below that could be accurately repeated again.

The codes were conceptually grouped together and put under first-order themes through uniting quotes with similar meaning and separating quotes with different meanings. According to Saldaña (2016), "themeing [sic] may allow you to draw out a code's truncated essence by elaborating on its meanings" (p. 231). These first-order themes were then grouped using the same conceptual grouping method to create second-order themes. This analysis allowed the following higher-order themes to be revealed: A) The efficiency of the

physical setting, B) The challenge of the climbing experience, and C) Social relationships at the venue (see Appendix 7 for a diagram of the thematic analysis). Selective coding was then undertaken to look back at the raw data to find further confirmatory as well as contradictory findings in relation to the themes (Jones, 2015). This enhanced the credibility of the findings as it meant that no relevant data was left out of the analysis. This thorough process of interpreting all the data allowed the research questions regarding the construction of place meanings to be comprehensively addressed.

To validate the interpretations of this data, the researcher has previously been reflexive about their role within the data collection process and how this may have influenced the findings (Jones, 2015). While, in order to avoid confirmation bias, the researcher has showed that the data can be traced back to its origins and that informed, strategic and principled methodological decisions have resulted in fair and balanced interpretations (Sparkes and Smith, 2014).

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has addressed the research methodology undertaken within this study. The researcher has shown how the chosen constructionist ontology and interpretivist epistemology has influenced the case study design. These approaches along with participant observation and semi-structured interview methods have been chosen to effectively investigate the place meanings of recreational indoor rock climbers. The ethical considerations and validity and reliability issues within the research methodology have also been addressed. The next chapter will be a discussion of the results presented through the place meanings themes that have been revealed from this data analysis process.

Chapter 4

Results and discussion

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this investigation was to reveal the place meanings of recreational indoor rock climbers within this one case study setting. The research findings revealed that an array of place meanings generate important and diverse attachments between climbers and the indoor rock climbing venue. In this chapter, these findings will be presented using the themes generated from the coding and thematic analysis of participants narratives drawn from in-depth semi-structured interviews. The following themes and sub-themes were identified:

Theme A: The efficiency of the physical setting

- Consistency
- Accessibility

Theme B: The challenge of the climbing experience

- Variety
- Overcoming the climbing challenge

Theme C: Social relationships at the venue

- Sense of community
- Partner bonds

These findings couched within a Symbolic Interactionism framework, indicate that the construction of participants place meanings that encapsulated their experiences were dependent on both the physical qualities that define the setting, and the social interactions with the people at the venue. Therefore, the participants place meanings were driven by both what they did in the setting and with whom. As a consequence, meaningful objects were found to be responsible for the participant's behaviour in the setting. Participants discussed important place meanings that incorporated a place dependency, place identity and social bonding, thus implying that viewing the data through different place attachment

dimensions was a suitable approach. The following sections will explore the findings through the above themes in greater detail.

4.2 Theme A: The efficiency of the physical setting

This first theme indicates that place meanings ascribed to the indoor rock climbing venue are reinforced by the efficiency of the physical setting, which illustrates the importance of the physical features. Within this theme, meanings of consistency and accessibility reveal the functional benefit of the indoor rock climbing venue. These place meanings are centred on an attachment to the place dependency of the venue to meet these needs of the participants which contributes to a meaningful experience.

4.2.1 Consistency

Findings suggest that the consistency of the indoor rock climbing venue appealed to the participants. For example, participants expressed how the year-round consistent environmental conditions of the setting meant that the climbing experience was not affected by the weather:

“I thought to myself can I really be bothered to jump in a car on a Friday night, drive all the way to North Wales or the lakes or the Peak District where we used to climb and the chances are you’d get there and the weather would be lousy, so you couldn’t climb anyway...it’s just hassle and I just thought, I’d done all that. I don’t need that hassle, I’m going to remain with the indoor environment because let’s face it you can do this 12 months of the year regardless of the weather.” (Joe, Interview notes 2, 24/08/2017)

This demonstrates that the climbing experience is more efficient and reliable when undertaken indoors, leading to place meanings of consistency which reflects a dependence towards the indoor setting. These findings align with Eden and Barratt (2010) who suggest that the indoor rock climbing venue functions as an environment that provides year-round climbing making it a reliable setting for its users. On the other hand, this control of the environmental conditions of a place has also been associated with consumerism and suggested as a negative way of experiencing the world (Eden and Barratt, 2010). Although, findings by Roullet, Adjizian and Auger (2016) revealed that touring skiers similarly chose

sites for practical purpose. This implies that a sense of place is linked to functional purposes where the skier seeks as much control over the environment as possible. This utilitarian interpretation of a place does not mean that the experience and qualities provided by a place are dismissed (Roult, Adjizian and Auger, 2016).

Participants further stated that the consistency of the venue also allowed them to efficiently achieve what they wanted from their climbing experience:

“...you might end up doing 15 [to] 20 climbs during 2 or 3 hours here...I quite like that, there’s success fairly quickly, because you can get to the top fairly quickly and then obviously you can start a new route and hopefully [have] success again, and you can leave here thinking, well I’ve done 20 routes and I had success maybe 15 times.” (Joe, Interview notes 2, 24/08/2017)

Ritzer’s (2008) concept of ‘McDonaldization’ supports these findings due to the way the indoor rock climbing experience provides this efficient climbing service. In this instance, like a customer that expects instant gratification by acquiring and consuming their fast-food meal efficiently, the indoor rock climber also expects an efficient service by being able to complete a desired number of climbing routes within a certain time frame. This indicates how the venue can construct place meanings of satisfaction due to it providing an efficient climbing service that gives the climber this instant feeling of success. This demonstrates a place dependency due to the functional value attributed to the venue because of its ability to facilitate desired leisure experiences that satisfies the needs of the individual which cannot be found at any other place (Williams et al., 1992; Budruk and Wilhelm Stanis, 2013).

Consistency was also an important place meaning for participants regarding the grades that were assigned to the climbing routes at the venue:

“...that the grades are true so all the [level] 5’s are similar, all the [level] 6’s are similar. If you go to a different climbing wall it is different but in a particular venue you tend to know what you’re going to get.” (Steve, Interview notes 5, 21/09/2017)

This level of consistency in the grading of climbs is important for participants to feel confident that the routes they are climbing are reliable. This becomes important when making accurate judgements about the routes and when assessing one’s performance.

Interestingly, this participant suggests that this grading consistency doesn't always bridge across to other indoor rock climbing venues. Consequently, in this instance the McDonaldization (Ritzer, 2008) dimension of 'predictability', where fast-food products are the same from one geographic setting to another, doesn't uphold when compared to the climbing grades from one venue to another.

Consistent safety conditions at the venue is also an important place meaning for participants:

"...when you come in here you see a lot of training going on, you see people showing young kids how to climb and they are obviously trained as instructors...that's part of it, you know you're in a safe environment."
(Kevin, Interview notes 4, 05/09/2017)

Participants also described how the equipment is well maintained at the venue:

"...the climbing wall maintains their equipment to a good standard...I find the equipment provided by the climbing wall very good and I don't think I've had any problems at all." (John, Interview notes 7, 03/10/2017)

There is a dependency on the venue to make climbers feel secure by consistently adhering to high safety standards. This indicates important place meanings of trust and confidence, allowing participants to have a meaningful climbing experience. This is supported by literature which suggests that it is crucial for indoor sports centres that cater for outdoor adventure sports to operate a tight safety policy that guarantees the safety of the participants (van Bottenburg and Salome, 2010). Eden and Barratt (2010) concur that the indoor climbing wall is a highly managed space where the majority of risks are removed or designed out.

4.2.2 Accessibility

Participants discussed arriving at the indoor rock climbing venue and being able to have easy access to the climbing activity due to the simple equipment required:

"You can just climb with your shoes and chalk." (George, Interview notes 3, 31/08/2017)

Similarly, participants suggested that you don't even need your own climbing equipment to access the venue, making it easier for both regular indoor rock climbers and those new to the sport to start climbing:

“...you can just turn up, hire a pair of shoes, borrow a chalk bag and you're ready to go, that's it!” (Andy, Interview notes 6, 28/09/2017)

These findings suggest that this easy accessibility to the venue, due to the simple equipment required, was an important place meaning that was constructed from the interaction with the setting. Such findings corroborate with research by Eden and Barratt (2010) who suggest that the urban based climber requires minimal kit. While van Bottenburg and Salome (2010) state how the “accessible character” (p. 153) of these indoor facilities are a unique selling point. Similarly, linking to this accessible nature of being able to hire equipment, Roult, Adjizian and Auger (2016) found that skiing environments that rented equipment were highly valued places for beginners and intermediate skiers.

The accessibility of the indoor rock climbing setting also includes catering for different climbing abilities, with participants suggesting:

“...you've got something for everybody...I'm feeling better now but a year ago I was struggling with my climbing, so I could climb a grade 4 while [name of climbing partner] could climb a grade 6. On most walls, you have 3 climbs on each line, you can climb whatever you feel like and nobody really minds what you climb, nobody says, oh, you only climbing a [level] 4 this week? If that's how you feel then you can do that, it's quite nice.” (Steve, Interview notes 5, 21/09/2017)

The access to the climbing setting for all levels of ability indicates place meanings of inclusivity and the opportunity for everyone to have success in the climbing experience. These findings again imply a place dependency towards the venue with regards to how the place satisfies the needs or goals of an individual. Kulczycki and Hinch (2014) support this finding by suggesting that the indoor rock climbing venue enables climbers of varying abilities to experience challenge. Roult, Adjizian and Auger (2016) also found important place bonds were revealed at ski sites that provided suitable challenge in the ski trail network so that both beginners and experts could progress on a variety of trail levels.

Further to this, two participants discussed how previous injuries that have stopped them from taking part in other sports, do not affect their access to indoor rock climbing:

“Fortunately, the wrist problems that I’ve got don’t affect me when I’m climbing.” (Joe, Interview notes 2, 24/08/2017)

“I’d been playing squash for a long time but I couldn’t really play squash cos of my knees so I went climbing.” (George, Interview notes 3, 31/08/2017)

Participants even suggested how accessing this climbing venue has actually helped his previous knee injury:

“...if anything, it’s beneficial I think.” (John, Interview notes 7, 03/10/2017)

These findings give an alternative view of how indoor rock climbing can be used to recover from injuries as opposed to causing them (Jones et al., 2007). This is also aligned with how indoor rock climbing has been used for therapy and rehabilitation (Luttenberger et al., 2015; Makarczuk and Makarczuk, 2015; NHS, 2017).

Interestingly, when discussing the location of the venue, findings suggest that the access when travelling to it was inconvenient for the participants:

“Well to be honest with you...the drive up here drives me nuts. It’s busy, and to be honest if I really don’t feel like it, I bail...if this [venue] was a lot nearer I would come more often.” (Alison, Interview notes 1, 17/08/2017)

These findings indicate that there are negative place meanings of inconvenience towards the climbing setting. Participants are choosing to travel to a venue that is inconveniently located. Yet, the inconvenient location is suggested to be worth it due to other factors:

“It’s worth the journey. Yes, it’s a bit of a pain...but it’s worth it for the size of the centre.” (Steve, Interview notes 5, 21/09/2017)

This suggests that place meanings regarding the climbing provision of the venue are prioritised over the convenience of its location. This indicates an interesting change of priorities from their previous indoor rock climbing venue when the lack of climbing provision was accepted due to its convenient location:

“...you accept the short comings of the [name of previous climbing venue] because it was...easy to get to. The problem...was it only has 9 lines, 3 of

them are starter lines so you only really have 6 in total and they really didn't change the climbs so week after week it was just the same old climbs. Whereas here they have a programme of changing everything and there are things here that I'll never climb because I'm never going to get upside down on the [names wall], but there are things that I can have a go at and stretch myself." (Steve, Interview notes 5, 21/09/2017)

This contradicts literature that states how indoor rock climbing facilities are typically selected based on convenient location (Kulczycki and Hinch, 2014). Similarly, Eden and Barratt (2010) suggest that convenience is typical of such purpose-built leisure recreational spaces. The change of climbing venue that participant 5 explains above, is supported by Seamon (2014) in that people's feelings for a place shift over time. The place meanings that participants constructed at their previous climbing venue changed and resulted in them seeking a greater climbing challenge. This sits within Blumer's (1969) third premise of the Symbolic Interactionism approach in that interpretations and meanings for objects are not fixed and can change over time. Similarly, these findings support suggestions that relationships to places are a life-long phenomenon that develops and transforms over time as the individual experiences their social world (Manzo, 2005; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). Manzo (2005) continues that even past experiences in a previous place can influence place relationships in a new place. In this regard, the findings support Gustafson's (2001) 'temporal dimension' where place becomes connected to the life path of the individual in which places may be regarded as an ongoing process. The shift in place meaning priorities towards a greater climbing challenge leads to the second theme of the findings.

4.3 Theme B: The challenge of the climbing experience

In this second theme, place meanings were influenced by the challenge of the climbing experience. Place meanings were centred on the sub-themes of variety and overcoming the climbing challenge. Once again, there is a place dependency attachment to the setting that provides the participants with variety in the climbing challenge. There is also evidence of an attachment to the place identity of the venue due to the emotional bond that the participants experience when overcoming the climbing challenge.

4.3.1 Variety

The need for variety was an important place meaning relating to the different styles of climbing wall and other training facilities that are provided at the venue. All seven participants used the word variety when describing the indoor rock climbing venue. Here are two of the participants views:

“Variety mostly...it’s just a lot bigger than anywhere else nearer...you’ve got the bouldering, training room, lead ropes, overhangs, slabs, auto-belays and everything.” (Andy, Interview notes 6, 28/09/2017)

“You have variety of climbs...there’s a lot of walls here. I love the slab...and one day I’d like to do something fancy like that overhang.” (Alison, Interview notes 1, 17/08/2017)

This indicates a place dependency on the venue to provide variety in the climbing experience to maintain the climbers interest through the challenge it provides. This aligns with findings by Roult, Adjizian and Auger (2016) who found that experienced touring skiers suggested that variety was one of the essential factors relating to the ski trails.

The financial investment in the facilities at the venue that allows such climbing variety is recognised by the participants. For example, this participant stated:

“They are obviously spending money on it, I mean they are changing the climbs fairly regularly, they put a lot of money into constructing this overhanging bit in the centre, we watched them do that.” (Kevin, Interview notes 4, 05/09/2017)

This constructs place meanings of loyalty as the climbers will continue to use this venue due to it providing variety through new climbing walls. This corroborates with literature that suggests that loyalty can be linked to the design, layout, and operation of indoor climbing facilities (Kulczycki and Hinch, 2014). Participants discussed how the regular changing of the climbing routes was important for the variety and a challenging climbing experience:

“...they change the routes on such a regular basis you’re never going to get fed up...you know there’s going to be some new climbs to do. That’s really, I think why I love it.” (Joe, Interview notes 2, 24/08/2017)

“They do change these holds around, that’s for sure, then it becomes a bit more challenging.” (George, Interview notes 3, 31/08/2017)

The continuous stimulus of new challenging climbs can allow the opportunity for the concept of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, cited in Dant and Wheaton, 2007). This states that to remain in flow it is necessary to increase the complexity of the activity by developing sufficient skills and taking on new challenges (Hardie-Bick and Bonner, 2015). As the difficulty of the activity increases due to the changing of the climbing routes, it enables the climbers to challenge themselves. However, participants also point out the importance of having a good balance between changing the routes and allowing enough time to complete them:

“...they do swap the climbs around quite a bit here so you know, you’re just about to achieve on a particular climb that you thought you’d never be able to climb and then they swap it so you can start all over again!” (George, Interview notes 3, 31/08/2017)

“You don’t want routes that are getting changed really quickly otherwise if there are a particular group of routes that you can’t quite do but you want to try to complete them, if they’re changed really quickly then you never have a chance to, and that’s frustrating! You don’t want routes that just don’t get changed for 6 months because you’re not going to benefit, certainly not from a training point of view, and probably not even if you just come here for social climbing and if the routes are always the same then it gets a bit monotonous.” (John, Interview notes 7, 03/10/2017)

This implies a place dependency on the venue to effectively control the route changing schedule. This is supported by Gustafson’s (2001) analytical framework for the understanding of what makes places meaningful. He suggests that the interaction between the environment and self is often perceived as being meaningful because it offers the respondents opportunities to perform certain activities and to feel or experience something desirable. In this instance the variety in the climbing environment gives the participants a meaningful experience and confirms findings that indoor climbers are influenced by the controlled setting (Kulczycki and Hinch, 2014).

Another climbing experience that gives the participants variety at the venue are the auto-belay devices. These are a modern feature of the indoor rock climbing facility and allow participants access to top-rope climbing without the need of a belay partner. This participant states:

“I think they’re really, really good I’ve got to say and sort of [an] invention for the climbing wall to enable people...who...are on their own and want to do routes it’s absolutely ideal.” (John, Interview notes 7, 03/10/2017)

Auto-belays are positively spoken about when the option of climbing with a partner is not available. Participants added further benefits of auto-belay devices for climbing technique training and building stamina:

“...with auto-belays it’s a good way of building up strength and stamina because you don’t get an awful lot of rest in between climbs so you have to almost programme yourself to rest I think because within half an hour or an hour max you can be absolutely shot away.” (Joe, Interview notes 2, 24/08/2017)

“They’re very functional...and good for training...in an hour you can do 15 climbs on one of those and be completely exhausted.” (Andy, Interview notes 6, 28/09/2017)

Though, others described how using auto-belays can construct meanings of isolation when using them:

“...it is quite a lonely experience and there’s no-one saying, hey that was good, whereas if you’re climbing with someone else you’re going to be chatting most of the time.” (Kevin, Interview notes 4, 05/09/2017)

“...the auto-belays are good practice for climbing but a little bit soulless...I wouldn’t choose to spend an evening on the auto-belays if I could climb with someone else.” (Steve, Interview notes 5, 21/09/2017)

These findings about the auto-belay devices suggest that although they provide good functional benefits and training opportunities, they also construct negative meanings associated with climbing alone. This is similar to Main’s (2013) research in an urban public park where participants discussed how a sense of loneliness and isolation created a

negative experience. This aligns with findings that negative meanings are also part of the place experience (Manzo, 2005).

4.3.2 Overcoming the climbing challenge

Participants reflect that overcoming the climbing challenge was an important part of the indoor rock climbing experience:

“I look at the route and think, yeah or look at a particular move and think you know, that’s not going to beat me and I’m fairly determined that I’m going to crack it, I’m going to do it!” (Joe, Interview notes 2, 24/08/2017)

“Well I suppose it’s doing a climb you haven’t done before...its feeling like you’re improving I suppose. The harder the climb the more you feel you’ve improved. You’re competing against yourself really.” (George, Interview notes 3, 31/08/2017)

This demonstrates a place identity at the venue through these findings about the participants personal improvement in their climbing ability. This reflects literature which states that positive experiences of self were also found in windsurfers who took pleasure in intrinsic factors such as challenging themselves (Dant and Wheaton, 2007). Similarly, suitable challenges of the environment provided skiers with the opportunity for personal growth (Roult, Adjizian and Auger, 2016). In addition to this, Gustafson’s (2001) analytical framework for understanding what makes places meaningful suggests that the relationship between the environment and self provides opportunities for personal development. While, Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) defined self-efficacy as an essential principle in the relationship between place and self-identity. This emphasis on the self is reflected within Blumer’s (1969) Symbolic Interactionist framework. He suggests how the meanings we assign objects can impact the self and be responsible for human behaviour.

The participants enjoy pushing themselves by attempting new routes to try and overcome the climbing challenge:

“...pushing grades, pushing yourself, doing something you wouldn’t have done before. Overcoming confidence, if you try something that was out of your ability range...and say come on let’s have a go, it’s liberating...actually

progressing, that's a big part of it; progression. Feeling like you're actually moving along all the time, so that's good. That's what actually makes it more satisfying by doing the things that you were otherwise going to avoid."

(Andy, Interview notes 6, 28/09/2017)

This finding suggests that the more intense the climbing challenge, the greater the pleasure in overcoming it and not giving up. This is similar to the findings by Spinney (2006) that the greater the pain and suffering when cycling up Mont Ventoux, the greater the pleasure. This supports Manzo's (2005) concept that suggests it is not simply places themselves that are significant, but rather the "experience-in-place" (p. 74) that creates meaning, and recognising that both the physical location and the nature of the experience is inextricably bound to the other. This experience is also aligned with another element of the concept of flow in that the challenge of an activity can produce a heightened sense of self, a personal sense of control and self-determination (Hardie-Bick and Bonner, 2015).

Problem solving was also an integral part of how the participants overcome the climbing challenge and became engaged in the experience:

"I think that's another part of what I get out of indoor climbing now, it's the problem-solving side of it. It happens a lot particularly when you're climbing quite close to your limit. You look at a route and you try and read it, look at the holds and think what way the route might go but it doesn't always go the way you might think so you may fail initially and yeah, it's just a case of solving that problem. Where are you going to put your feet or how you've got to use a particular hold, and then it opens the route up and you can do it." (John, Interview notes 7, 03/10/2017)

The participants also respect that the climbing challenge is a personal endeavour and however other climbers wish to overcome it, is up to them. For example, if any climbers choose to 'rainbow' the climb, a term used to describe using other coloured holds that are not on the official route, then this is accepted:

"...if that's what they want to do then fine, it's very much a personal thing so that wouldn't bother me at all. It doesn't bother me at all if people want to do a rainbow." (John, Interview notes 7, 03/10/2017)

Interestingly, participants also suggest how 'rainbowing' a climb is a very acceptable method of building up knowledge of a climb that is too difficult on the first attempt:

"...I see it as a way of completing a climb that is a little bit beyond you and then eliminating the holds you are not supposed to use. So, I suppose if you climb something that is really hard and you have to use 3 or 4 different holds, then try to eliminate one every time until you can hopefully do the route. So, there are benefits to using different colours." (John, Interview notes 7, 03/10/2017)

These findings reveal how the participants can ascend routes differently and experience the climb in their own personal way. This corresponds with findings by Dutkiewicz (2015) that every climber ascends a route differently and experiences the climb as a unique event. He also suggests that gaining experiential knowledge when climbing is an embodied experience. In the example above, the climbing movement when using the rainbow technique is giving participants important knowledge of the climb and enables them to progress. Similarly, Spinney (2006) suggests how the body learns about a place through the movement within it, referred to as "embodied rhythms" (p. 709). This rainbow method of learning about the climbs can also be described as "physical insideness" (Rowes, 1983, cited in Chaudhury, 2008, p. 13) which relates to how the familiarity with the environment creates an awareness of the physical features of a place.

However, findings also indicate that it is important to be honest about completing a route in which a climber has received additional support such as rainbowing due to how others may respond:

"...what grates me sometimes is that you see people do these climbs and they cheat and when they get to the top it's like, I've done it! And you think, no you haven't, and that I find a little annoying. So, as we used to say in years gone by, you're only cheating yourself!" (Joe, Interview notes 2, 24/08/2017)

"...if you're purposely saying right let's all have a go at this one hard climb and you climb it clean and somebody else climbs it but they put a wrong colour in then they will be made known about it!" (Steve, Interview notes 5, 21/09/2017)

These findings demonstrate how honesty when climbing is an important place meaning. The respect between climbers is built when they have an honest relationship and understanding with each other. This aligns with the concept of social bonding in that building meaningful social relationships within a place are built on mutual trust (Mihaylov and Perkins, 2014).

There was an appreciation that the equipment is essential when overcoming the climbing challenge:

“...we use a harness to keep ourselves safe, [it] enables us to climb.” (Steve, Interview notes 5, 21/09/2017)

This finding that the harness facilitates the climb is supported by literature about how the climber and kit enters into a relationship that co-enables the climb (Barratt, 2011). Similarly, Spinney (2006) in his research on cyclists refers to this as “hybrid rhythms” (p.717) when both bicycle and rider become inseparable from each other in the movement. Spinney (2006) suggests that it is fundamental to view experiences in this hybrid way in rethinking how people live, feel and create meaning within their surroundings. This notion of hybridity develops the bonds with the climbing equipment and gives further meaning to the experience.

The familiar routines with climbing equipment ensured that safe climbing was also evident in the participants interactions:

“I think because we’ve been doing it now for quite a while it becomes second nature to be able to safely tie the knots.” (Steve, Interview notes 5, 21/09/2017)

The participants also described a bond between them and their equipment that was built through familiarity with it:

“...it’s nice to have your own equipment, you get familiar with it and while I said before that I don’t geek out over which harness...but at the same time you do kind of form familiarity and almost like a bond with the gear you have, like my harness has literally stopped me from dying a bunch of times. So yeah you do get used to it, the feel of the equipment.” (Andy, Interview notes 6, 28/09/2017)

These findings regarding the familiarity with the climbing equipment aligns with Barratt (2012) that repeated engagements between climbers and their kit develops familiarity, providing comfort and support. This bond with the climbing equipment is developed over time, and constructs place meanings of confidence through safe practice. This relates closely to the important place meanings of safety which were discussed previously in theme A.

The interactions of overcoming the climbing challenge constructs a sense of achievement that is experienced by the climbers:

“You feel a sense of achievement...Yes! You can surprise yourself...and think, I never thought I could do that...and you manage it and it’s a great sense of achievement.” (Alison, Interview notes 1, 17/08/2017)

“...if I’m doing a hard climb, you get a sense of exhilaration and a sense of achievement...especially if it’s a climb that you’ve maybe not done before and struggled on before and all of a sudden you do it. Yeah great sense of achievement.” (Joe, Interview notes 2, 24/08/2017)

“Well for me, it would be doing a climb I’ve been trying to do and I finally do it. That gives you a really good feeling, it’s like anything if you set yourself a trial of something and you achieve it you obviously get a buzz about it.” (Kevin, Interview notes 4, 05/09/2017)

The experience of achieving something that was challenging and worthwhile constructs powerful place meanings from the climbing action at the venue. This can be viewed as an essential part of the participant’s place identity, resulting in a strong emotional attachment to the place. This demonstrates how a place can become integral to a person’s personal and communal identity and self-worth (Seamon, 2014). This also aligns with Manzo (2005) that relationships to places represent people’s ever-evolving identity and self-awareness because they provide opportunities for self-development.

The indoor climbing challenge was also found to be an invigorating exercise for the participants:

“...well like I say, invigorating! I mean always on the way here...I...will be quite tired. But on the way home we’re always really perky, it gets your

blood flowing and wakes you up, move[s] your body and everything. And it's the added bonus of like...going to the gym but not boring. It's like I can have fun and be doing exercise." (Andy, Interview notes 6, 28/09/2017)

"I feel better after climbing than I do before, I've been [at place of work] since 5 o'clock this morning, so feel a bit sleepy at 4 o'clock but I come climbing for a couple of hours and actually come home fairly pumped up and quite jolly." (Steve, Interview notes 5, 21/09/2017)

These findings corroborate with Mittelstaedt (1997) who suggests that indoor rock climbing can lead to benefits such as improved physical and mental health, while Kulczycki and Hinch (2014) found that physical fitness was one of their nine place-based themes in their findings about place meanings at indoor rock climbing facilities. These findings also support Main (2013) that places can have restorative effects on people by escaping from one's usual routine and engaging in activities that are entertaining or that satisfy one's goals.

Findings suggest that indoor rock climbing is viewed as a sport in its own right:

"...it's a sport itself indoor climbing and a lot of people would agree with that I think. There are indoor climbing competitions and stuff with people that only indoor climb and that is their sport." (Andy, Interview notes 6, 28/09/2017)

The view that indoor rock climbing is an authentic sport is supported by Barratt (2011) and Zimmerman (2008) who both suggest that indoor climbing is a sport in its own right, while Kulczycki and Hinch (2014) also found that indoor climbing places provided an opportunity for a distinct sport. Place authenticity for artificial venues has also been addressed by Tivers (1997) in her study of dry ski-slopes. Similar to the findings above, she revealed how dry ski-slopes provided physical skiing experiences that were satisfying and authentic for its users.

4.4 Theme C: Social relationships at the venue

This theme reveals place meanings that are constructed by the interactions with others at the indoor rock climbing venue. The findings indicate that meaningful social relationships

were built with the wider climbing community, within the climbing group and with individual climbing partners. Within this theme, place meanings were associated with a sense of community and partner bonds. These place meanings were therefore centred on an attachment to the venue through experiences of social bonding which also became part of the climbers' place identity.

4.4.1 Sense of community

The community refers to all the people within the indoor rock climbing venue, such as the climbers and staff. When participants were asked about the indoor rock climbing venue, all of them expressed positive views about the interactions they have with the people there:

“...the people you tend to climb with and staff that you tend to meet when you get here, it's part of the scene...I quite like the closeness and friendliness of this environment.” (Joe, Interview notes 2, 24/08/2017)

“I think the interaction, having a laugh, seeing all the people that come climbing in the group and the other people that we know...just generally interacting with people. I think that's part of it, part of its exercise, partly it's the actual venue and meeting the people which is quite nice.” (Steve, Interview notes 5, 21/09/2017)

Participants continue by describing the place as a community:

“This place definitely has more atmosphere like it feels like a proper community here, you see the same people here.” (Andy, Interview notes 6, 28/09/2017)

These findings about the interactions with the people at the venue constructs place meanings of friendship and demonstrates a strong sense of community both within the participants own climbing group as well as with the other climbers and the staff. The climbing venue becomes more than a setting for just climbing activities, it becomes a setting that enables the participants to connect with one another and experience social bonding. Hence, a sense of community is a highly symbolic place meaning for the participants. Rowles (1983, cited in Chaudhury, 2008) refers to this as “social insideness”

(p. 13) where people experience the feeling of being an integral part of the community through the social relationships and exchanges. Manzo (2005) concurs that a place can become meaningful for the social opportunities one finds there. These findings also align with Mihaylov and Perkins (2014) who suggest that these social aspects of a community or place provides the experience of positive social bonding and this is what the participants build an attachment to. While Gustafson (2001) suggests that places become meaningful because of the relationship between self and others, and the sense of community that such social relations create.

The findings also revealed further symbolic place meanings of acceptance and security within the climbing group:

“They accept me for who I am. The thing is, throughout my whole life I’ve tried to fit in but I don’t have to worry about fitting in with these guys because they know me, so I feel comfy...I like it up here...within the group I feel safe...it’s like a family.” (Alison, Interview notes 1, 17/08/2017)

The metaphor of the “family” that is used by this participant reflects a highly symbolic place meaning and aptly describes their experience of connection, stability and belonging within a place. This finding is supported by Mihaylov and Perkins (2014) that feelings of membership or belongingness to a group are core elements relating to a sense of community. Similarly, McClinchey (2017) suggests that belonging to a community provides a strong emotional sense of support and identity. While Manzo (2005) suggests how people carve out their own niches and places that provide an important sense of belonging and social connectedness. As well as an attachment to the social bonding of a place, this finding also reflects a place identity due to participants associating their personal and group identity with the identity of the venue (Seamon, 2014), and how it serves as a meaning-making function about who they are (Mihaylov and Perkins, 2014). Subsequently, this aligns with Relph’s (1976, cited in McClinchey, 2017) sense of insiderness [sic] where one feels like an insider when one has deep experiences with a place, as opposed to a place being little more than the background or setting for activities. Therefore, this finding demonstrates that the interactions within the climbing group constructs a strong emotional attachment to the venue.

Interestingly, the interactions between separate climbing groups were viewed in a positive way in this research and also contributes to the sense of community:

“You have the group we actually climb with and there’s a bunch of little groups you see and always bumping into them and chat to them. It comes with the size of it again, there’s a lot more people here, a lot more climbs here and therefore you get a lot stronger community.” (Andy, Interview notes 6, 28/09/2017)

This indicates that the indoor rock climbing venue is well equipped to facilitate positive interactions between different climbing groups. These findings are supported by Kulczycki and Hinch (2014) that interaction and camaraderie with others at indoor climbing facilities contributed to the development of an indoor climbing community. This contradicts findings in an outdoor rock climbing study by Kulczycki (2014) who found that outdoor rock climbers experienced negative ‘between group’ interactions due to concerns over crowded routes.

Findings also suggest that the staff at the venue play an important role in creating and maintaining a positive atmosphere within the community and are respected by the participants:

“The friendliness of the staff, they’re always very approachable. You can talk to them and I think that’s important in an environment like this and they’re always very safety conscious.” (Joe, Interview notes 2, 24/08/2017)

“Yeah, the employees of the climbing centre as they go around we talk to them...passing the time of day, and they might come over and they’re obviously checking up everyone’s safety, they’re floor walking so that’s part of the centre.” (Steve, Interview notes 5, 21/09/2017)

This indicates the importance of the social bonds between the staff and the participants at the venue. The friendliness and approachability of the staff, and the observation that they are checking climbers’ safety enhances the sense of community and contributes to the participants meaningful experience. This finding aligns with Johnson, Glover and Stewart (2014) in their study of a downtown urban area, that visual assurances of positive social interactions were significant to participants acceptance of a space as welcoming or comfortable.

4.4.2 Partner bonds

Partner bonds refer to the union between the climber and their regular climbing partner who belays them at the indoor rock climbing venue. Key findings have indicated that important place meanings are associated with these bonds. The following participants suggest that this bond with their climbing partner is built on meanings of trust over time:

“Well I suppose there’s like a trust bond and as much as...you can tell someone’s a good belayer, you have to experience it for yourself before you can have one hundred percent faith in that person.” (Andy, Interview notes 6, 28/09/2017)

“...you build up a trust...with your climbing partner and you get to know their weaknesses and strengths. Certainly, from a falling off perspective, and eventually one has to fall off when you’re climbing don’t you, and I have had it before [where] people haven’t held me and I’ve actually hit the floor, admittedly not indoors but climbing outdoors and I don’t climb with those people anymore. So, you do build up a bit of a trust relationship with them I think and all the time, especially when you’re on a tricky move you think well I could come off here, but you know that your partner’s going to hold you and I think that’s quite important.” (Joe, Interview notes 2, 24/08/2017)

These findings illustrate the importance of trust between climbers and how this develops partner bonds. This is positioned within the Symbolic Interactionist framework in that all human behaviour is social, involving social interaction and the development of shared meaning (Gilbert, 2008). This aligns with Mihaylov and Perkins (2014) that an emotional connection based on mutual trust leads to social bonding. This powerful meaning of trust allowed the climbers to push themselves during a hard move which was shown as a meaningful part of the indoor rock climbing experience that was addressed in Theme B. The final point made by this participant is an interesting finding that when a climber is attempting a hard move, this is when trust in the belayer becomes particularly important. These sentiments were echoed by other participants, for example:

“...it only really bothers me when I’m climbing close to my limit and I’d rather have someone belaying me who I know really well and I’ve got one

hundred percent confidence in them that if I fall they've got me." (John, Interview notes 7, 03/10/2017)

"...if someone's been belaying you one hundred and fifty times before and you've fallen tons of times [and been held]...then that's the person I want on the other end when I'm trying something that I'm not entirely comfortable with. It's not that having another person is a problem, it's just another thing on your mind. It's hard not to think about it sometimes, if I'm on a hard part I could be like, oh no, I'm going to fall, yes [name of regular partner] is going to catch me but with someone else I'd be like, are they though? It's that small fraction of doubt." (Andy, Interview notes 6, 28/09/2017)

A lack of trust in the belayer can be seen to affect performance and result in a negative experience for the climber. By not being able to fully engage in the climbing activity due to the concerns over safety, it would prevent experiences of enjoyment such as flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002 cited in Hardie-Bick and Bonner, 2015). This is because if a climber was worried about their safety, they would not be able to lose themselves in the activity (Hardie-Bick and Bonner, 2015). For that reason, trust between partners is a key place meaning if climbers wish to experience enjoyment and full engagement within the activity.

Intriguingly, findings suggest that a similar climbing ability is not an important factor when building trust with a partner:

"...ability really doesn't come into it as far as I'm concerned, I'm quite happy climbing with somebody that maybe is only climbing grades 4 or 5 and that's all they want to do, fine. If they're safe, and they're good at belaying and pay attention all the time to what's going on it's not an issue the fact they're not climbing quite as hard, or even if they're climbing harder I mean you know if people start climbing harder than me and they're happy climbing with me, fine." (Joe, Interview notes 2, 24/08/2017)

Here, this participant expresses that it is the safe practice of a climbing partner that is the most important factor in building trust. Though, findings did reveal that partner bonds can be enhanced when climbing partners happen to be of similar climbing ability due to the competition that can occur between them:

“I consider [name of climbing partner] a good friend now and we mainly climb together...some routes I do better, other routes he does better...it adds that little bit of competitive interest that drives you on.” (John, Interview notes 7, 03/10/2017)

This finding demonstrates how the judgements about other climbers’ ability can arouse healthy competition between them. According to Dant and Wheaton (2007), acceptance into a community or becoming an ‘insider’ is based on acquiring and displaying bodily skills that others in the group share. Consequently, this competition between climbing partners can enhance partner bonds and the feelings of acceptance within the group.

Interestingly, the participants develop a sense of awareness for their climbing partner due to the experience of regularly belaying them:

“...[you] almost feel through the rope if [they’re] struggling and that kind of thing. All subtle nuances that we might not realise when watching people belay that there’s so many little bits to it.” (Andy, Interview notes 6, 28/09/2017)

Further to this, being able to give suitable and realistic climbing advice was also an important factor in building partner bonds:

“...when you’re really struggling it’s the belayer you look to, to help you out. When you get used to each other...I wouldn’t suggest a massive reach to [climbing partner], I wouldn’t suggest to do it like I’d do it because I just know [they] won’t, but [they’re] good at smearing so I’d be like, maybe try smearing? So, there’s that aspect as well. You do get used to people’s climbing styles.” (Andy, Interview notes 6, 28/09/2017)

The knowledge that the climbers gain about their partners are through shared experiences with each other that has enabled them to tailor their advice to their partners strengths. This brings a different aspect of social bonding and indicates how the climbers support and encourage each other. This aligns with Hixon (2013) who revealed that shared experiences and connections that leisure participation facilitates can enhance social bonding. This level of interaction and social bonding is further evidence of the meaningful experience of indoor rock climbers.

4.5 Limitations

There are some limitations to acknowledge in this research. Due to the nature of case study research, the findings could not be generalised to different contexts or used as a representative view of all indoor rock climbers. Nonetheless, despite these limitations, this research contributes to a better understanding of place meanings associated with an indoor rock climbing venue.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the place meaning themes that have been interpreted from the narratives of recreational indoor rock climbers. These themes were A: The efficiency of the physical setting (Consistency and Accessibility); B: The challenge of the climbing experience (Variety and Overcoming the climbing challenge); and C: Social relationships at the venue (Sense of community and Partner bonds). The discussion, situated within a Symbolic Interactionist framework, was supported by previous indoor rock climbing studies and place meaning research that was addressed in Chapter 2. The results indicate that participants place meanings of the venue were attached to a sense of place dependency, place identity and social bonding. The next chapter will draw conclusions in relation to these place meaning findings.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to investigate the place meanings of recreational climbers at an indoor rock climbing venue. This was to address the issue that little is known about the meanings behind this growth sport from the perspective of the climbers who have chosen to remain indoors and take part in the sport on its own merit. Situated within a Symbolic Interactionist framework, three place meaning themes were revealed: A) The efficiency of the physical setting, B) The challenge of the climbing experience, and C) Social relationships at the venue. These place meanings uncovered important place attachments associated with place dependency, place identity and social bonding. These findings have contributed to the knowledge about the experiences of recreational indoor rock climbers at an indoor rock climbing venue.

This chapter will summarise the main findings, and suggest recommendations for policy, practice and further research in this area. For clarity, the research questions will be used to guide the concluding statements.

5.2 What place meanings are constructed from the interactions with the physical indoor rock climbing setting?

The findings revealed that place meanings constructed from the interactions with the physical indoor rock climbing setting were centred on efficiency. This efficiency of the venue was illustrated through place meanings of consistency and accessibility. This indicated that the physical qualities of the indoor rock climbing venue provided an important function through high safety standards, catering for different climbing abilities and providing a year-round climbing experience. These experiences were found to be dependent on how well the physical setting functioned in meeting the needs of the participants. Therefore, these findings support the notion that attachments to a place are dependent on its functional value to facilitate desired leisure experiences which satisfies the needs of the individual (Williams et al., 1992; Budruk and Wilhelm Stanis, 2013).

However, it was also revealed that a negative place meaning of inconvenience was associated with the location of the venue. This was illustrated by how the participants were prepared to travel to their current climbing venue, which was less conveniently located than their previous one, in order to experience the desired level of climbing challenge that the participants now required. This shows that interpretations and meanings for objects are not fixed and can change over time (Blumer, 1969). Similarly, this finding supports the idea that people's feelings for a place shift over time (Seamon, 2014) and that past experiences in a previous place can influence place relationships in a new place (Manzo, 2005). Though, it contradicts previous research that indoor rock climbing facilities are typically selected based on convenient location (Kulczycki and Hinch, 2014).

5.3 How does the climbing action construct place meanings?

The climbing action was found to construct place meanings through the challenge that it provided. These place meanings were related to variety and overcoming the climbing challenge. Participants required variety of the climbing challenge through the provision of different types of climbing walls and an effectively controlled route changing schedule that allowed adequate time to complete the climbs before they were changed. Once again this demonstrated a place dependency attachment to the setting to facilitate desired leisure experiences for the climbers.

The place meaning of overcoming the climbing challenge revealed that the venue was a place for personal development for the participants as they experienced achievement through pushing themselves and using problem solving skills. Thus, the climbing action was found to construct a place identity for the participants in that the venue became integral to the participants personal and communal identity and self-worth (Seamon, 2014). These findings also support Gustafson's (2001) notion that the relationship between the environment and the self provides opportunities for personal development. This made the place meaningful because it offered opportunities to perform certain activities and to feel or experience something desirable. This illustrates how the meanings for objects can impact the self (Blumer, 1969).

5.4 How does the interaction with the social world at the venue construct place meanings?

The interaction with the social world was found to construct highly symbolic place meanings centred on a sense of community and partner bonds. These place meanings revealed an attachment to the venue through experiences of social bonding within the wider climbing community, the climbing group and with individual climbing partners. The interactions within the climbing group revealed further symbolic place meanings of acceptance and security which illustrated a deep emotional attachment to the venue. These relationships were revealed as meaningful experiences which also contributed to the participants place identity and sense of belonging. These findings support the notion of “social insideness” (Rowles, 1983, cited in Chaudhury, 2008, p. 13) where people experience the feeling of being an integral part of the community through the social relationships and exchanges. Furthermore, the importance of trust between climbers in developing partner bonds confirms earlier work by Mihaylov and Perkins (2014) that an emotional connection based on mutual trust leads to social bonding. This demonstrates how all human behaviour is social, involving social interaction and the development of shared meaning (Gilbert, 2008). As a result, the climbing venue was not only a setting for climbing activities, but also a place that enabled participants to connect with one another and experience social bonding.

In summary, the results from this research couched within a Symbolic Interactionist framework, revealed that the venue provided a spatial context for a host of meaningful experiences that were influenced by both the physical and social setting of the venue. These physical and social interactions were important underlying factors that bonded the participants to the venue. Moreover, these place meaning findings about the indoor rock climbing experience ranged from simple descriptions to highly symbolic statements about the venue. Manzo (2005) refers to this as the “experience-in-place” (p. 74) which takes both the physical location and the nature of the experience, recognising that each is inextricably bound to the other.

The place meanings that the participants found most important were constructed from the efficiency, challenge and the social relationships at the venue. These place meanings revealed significant attachments through a place dependency, place identity and social

bonding at the venue. Therefore, the participants have revealed a vast array of important bonds towards the indoor rock climbing venue which has shown it to be an important place of meaning.

5.5 Implications and recommendations for policy and practice

The findings from this investigation have revealed important implications and recommendations for effective policy and practice in indoor rock climbing at both public venues and in school PE lessons. Based on the findings from this research study it is recommended that the indoor rock climbing experience is centred on efficiency, challenge and social relationships. Efficiency in the indoor rock climbing provision should focus on satisfying the functional needs of the participants through consistent and accessible means. This includes maintaining consistently high safety standards which are actively reinforced by staff members and supports previous research on indoor sports centres that cater for outdoor adventure sports (van Bottenburg and Salome, 2010). While, new recommendations based on the findings of this research study reveal the importance of reliable route grading of the climbing walls and the collaboration between different indoor rock climbing venues. This would provide consistent route grading across all venues which would give climbers the consistency that they desire. This grading must also be accessible for the inclusion of climbers of differing abilities so that everyone can experience an appropriate challenge and sense of achievement. This is also an important recommendation for indoor rock climbing PE lessons to ensure that adequate differentiation is provided for students to progress at their own ability level.

Reinforcing the research by Kulczycki and Hinch (2014), challenge was also found to be sought after by climbers through a variety of climbing walls, training facilities and a regular schedule for changing climbing routes. However, findings specific to this research study have found that this schedule must be well balanced to allow regular climbers enough time to complete the routes before they are changed again. Furthermore, it is recommended that indoor rock climbing venues provide the opportunity for climbers to engage in problem solving skills and to challenge themselves for their own personal development. It is also worth noting that new findings grounded in this research study revealed that climbers are prepared to travel to inconvenient located indoor rock climbing venues if the

right level of challenge is provided. This demonstrates that the financial investment in a venue to provide an effective climbing challenge can build a loyalty to the venue.

Finally, this research study has reinforced the findings of Kulczycki and Hinch (2014) that social relationships are an integral part of the climbing experience to develop a sense of community. Furthermore, as well as strong friendships, this research study revealed how relationships build a trust bond between climbing partners which gives participants greater confidence when climbing. Within PE lessons, it is recommended that climbing groups are selected based on students being friends with one another so that they initially feel comfortable in each other's company. These groups should then be kept the same throughout a scheme of work so that a trust bond can develop as the sessions continue. Lessons should also incorporate ways that groups can support other groups to build a sense of community within the lessons. This research study also revealed new findings regarding the positive social interactions between climbers and different climbing groups. This should be encouraged at indoor rock climbing venues, while the friendliness and approachability of staff should also be prioritised within the policy. Based on this study it is recommended that staff also lead organised climbing sessions for climbers to be introduced to other climbers to experience social bonding and provide an opportunity for competition. These recommendations for policy and practice are centred on efficiency, challenge and social relationships.

5.6 Recommendations for further research

The researcher believes that the findings from this study have reduced the gap and contributed to the knowledge regarding modern indoor rock climbing experiences. Further research would be to look at whether factors within the individual profile of the participants such as gender, age and level of experience affects their place meanings. This would further reveal important information about the indoor rock climbing experience.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Participant information sheet and introductory letter

Participant information sheet



An investigation into the place meanings of recreational climbers at an indoor rock climbing venue

A research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by Philip Lewis.

Background

I have been interested in indoor climbing since teaching it as a PE teacher since 2007. I have completed my Climbing Wall Award qualification and taken it up regularly as a leisure activity. I have chosen to study this topic as I am interested in the thoughts and feelings of climbers and what the interactions within indoor climbing means to them. Participation rates in indoor climbing has been steadily increasing and with its admission at the Olympic Games in Tokyo 2020 I believe its popularity will continue to rise. This has intrigued me to find out what the attraction is that brings people to climb indoors and the subsequent construction of meanings that are involved.

What will you be required to do?

Participants in this study will be required to undertake a semi-structured interview where they will discuss the meaning of indoor climbing for them.

To participate in this research you must:

Participants must be over 18 and must take part in indoor climbing regularly with the group.

Procedures

Participants will be asked to complete a one-to-one semi-structured interview with the researcher. In addition to this I will be using an observation field diary to record participant's comments and actions.

Feedback

Participants will have the opportunity to read through the interview transcripts and the final dissertation.

Confidentiality

All data and personal information will be stored securely within CCCU premises in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University's own data protection requirements. Data can only be accessed by Philip Lewis. After completion of the study, all data will be made anonymous (i.e. all personal information associated with the data will be removed).

Dissemination of results

Through the interview transcripts and the observation field diary entries, participants feedback about the topic of indoor rock climbing will be anonymously quoted and referred to in the dissertation. This will be referenced to relevant literature that supports the research question.

Deciding whether to participate

If you have any questions or concerns about the nature, procedures or requirements for participation do not hesitate to contact me. Should you decide to participate, you will be free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason.

Any questions?

If you have any questions, please contact Philip Lewis on p.lewis173@canterbury.ac.uk

Introductory letter



Canterbury Christ Church University
North Holmes Road
Canterbury
CT1 1QU

Dear

I am studying a Masters Degree by Research in Physical Education and Physical Activity at Canterbury Christ Church University and am investigating the place meanings of recreational climbers at an indoor rock climbing venue. I have chosen to study this topic as I am interested in the thoughts and feelings of climbers and what the interactions within indoor climbing means to them.

I have been interested in indoor climbing since teaching it as a PE teacher from 2007. I have completed my Climbing Wall Award qualification and taken it up regularly as a leisure activity. The sport of indoor rock climbing, compared to other sports has generally been under represented in literature and I hope to interest fellow climbers as well as non-climbers to this study.

Yours sincerely,

Philip Lewis

Appendix 2 – Consent form



CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: An investigation into the place meanings of recreational climbers at an indoor rock climbing venue

Name of Researcher:

Contact details:

Address
of venue:

Email:

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
3. I understand that any personal information that I provide to the researchers will be kept strictly confidential
4. I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Name of Researcher

Date

Signature

Copies: 1 for participant
 1 for researcher

Appendix 3 – Ethics clearance from the Faculty of Education Research Ethics committee at Canterbury Christ Church University



13th March 2017

Ref 16/EDU/026

Dear Phil

Project title: Symbolic meanings and interactions in indoor climbing.

Members of the Faculty of Education Research Ethics committee have reviewed your application and have agreed to grant approval.

I confirm that you can commence your research. Please notify me (or my replacement as Chair of the committee), of any significant change in the question, design or conduct of the study over its course.

This approval is conditional on you informing me once your research has been completed.

With best wishes for a successful project,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Viv Wilson", written over a horizontal line.

Dr Viv Wilson
Acting Chair, Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee.

Faculty of Education
Canterbury Christ Church University
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Professor Rama Thirunamachandran
Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Canterbury Christ Church University

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Appendix 4 – Examples of participant observation field diary entries taken in July and August 2017.

6th July 2017

6/7

Social		Physical	
<u>Drinking</u>	<u>General</u>	<u>Equip</u>	<u>Wall</u>
Dave + Simon played scrabble all night on Beebe Dazzle [Conquering attitude]	Chris - laptop Chris always wanted a computer about what he had done when about to do Dave + Simon - TOP update	Shoe - climbing (Claire) done when Shoe app Important done Chris but discomfort [Reliant to take off] Chalk - "Magic" (Phil) [Routine]	Hold - (Chris) [Personality] [Funky] [Challenging] Chris - finish on a good climb - gain [Satisfaction] Chris - Buys back to life "Roadkill" "Pie crust" Claire - did a 4/5 best checked a little by using their alarm Route setting schedule [Changes personality]
Dave + Simon disagreed with grade - gave a 6b+ not even a 6a!	Cycle social (Chris) Simon - 10 yrs ago photo.	Rope - Tying in a routine [Info]	
Chris - asked me to let him know when I was down. Different people here & about routine (I thought I did) [Safety]	Chris - GIE that - getting harder to get Top marks. Lester (instructor)	Shoe - Kitting out for (me) Comfort	
Chris - Recommends holds for support			

"Pie crust" 7

13th July 2017

Social		Physical	
Climbing	General	Equip	Wall
<p><u>Jin</u> - Clave went for a smoke. So Jin asked me to help him</p> <p>[supporting]</p> <p>Al - watched men who was shop complete a route more he could do</p> <p>Chris - "I've heard the slab is good"</p> <p>[New routes/challenge]</p> <p>Chris - tips on 'Drops' [Advice]</p>	<p>TOP (Dave) - "Good Range today"</p> <p><u>Chris/Phil</u> - checked people who climbing</p> <p>Not too because we can't make this route work</p> <p><u>Chris</u> - brought cables in to share. Using Dave's Ratchet</p> <p><u>Rich</u> - Diet chat. Putting on weight</p> <p><u>Chris</u> - Ram (John on Seaboard (Rover))</p>	<p><u>Rich</u> - Stress painful because he has to climb for a while. He took them off after first climb but it was more painful putting them back on a second time. In he kept them on</p> <p>[suffering] [Pain]</p> <p><u>Phil</u> - Always like to get heat checked by belayer [Safety]</p> <p>Head to head rope into bag.</p> <p><u>Jin</u> - "I got caught up in the rope at the top"</p>	<p><u>Phil</u> - Cut elbow on wall</p> <p><u>Chris</u> - wanted to try a climb because no-one else could do it</p> <p>[competitive/challenge]</p> <p><u>Dave</u> - Moving chalk off a hold</p> <p><u>Richard</u> - "Knew how to climb"</p> <p>- Harsh wall (Lazlo Razz)</p> <p>The Reach has rep for easier wall</p> <p><u>Rich</u> - mean/fingers</p> <p>Chris - "I'm climbing"</p> <p><u>Rich</u> - "I was scared but clean to go for it"</p>
<p>Abstract - Ideas + principles</p> <p>* 5 - Ideas of Identity/Culture</p> <p>Ideas of Loyalty</p>		<p>Chris - "Hard to build"</p> <p>[Language]</p> <p>Rich - in response, "I go. We got that from me: 'Noisy'."</p> <p>[Relationship]</p>	

3rd August 2017

Social		physical		3/8/17 5-8pm
climbing	General	Equip	wall	
P: "interesting" climb [Personality]	C: Said she was in a foul mood + wasn't going to come but now she's had a wonderful evening and 'the world is a better place'	S: His shoe came off during a heel hook + he was 'battered'; he couldn't carry on [they are a necessity - hybrid]	C: See comment in 'general' section [has the wall interaction (+social) given her a lift in spirits? Escape? enjoyment?]	
D: "challenging" wall [Personality]	C: Invited me to Social (Greenwich museum)	S: He applies finger tape before he climbs.	R: The route setter is a 'good job' [challenge, highly qualified]	
P+R: Good climbing today [Satisfying]	R: Invited chair on cycle	R: Holds wire in a funny place on some of the routes [Personality]	J: 'I haven't done that climb as a lead' [Difference to top roping]	
R: Injured climb it over by killing top boulders than I kept with 'well done' to be known I'm prepared to buy him beer	C: Making a cake met with for finger		P+R: (G) nice to get used to routes for confidence to go to routes, when they change for challenge but when you're not used to it...	
R: Told a couple of long they were on wrong rope [Expectations]	P: Bunter with Simon at reception			
	P: Alaska pros			
	J: 'I'm a great climber!'			
		you miss routes when they're changed		
Abstract: C: showed loyalty in coming out though she didn't feel like it. [Loyal to us + capture] P: 'I can see the route better'				
Extra: Wall: I am feeling much more satisfied because I'm getting better technically [Feelings of flow]				

Social		Physical	
General		Equip	
<p><u>drinking</u></p> <p>P: Generous route [Eats for grade] mean, generous, tricky hold [Personality]</p> <p>R: "Well done phil" [Signal for coming down]</p> <p>J: Positive about drinking and climbing next time</p> <p>R: Saying that I'm doing really well on the B's.</p> <p>J: Going outside climbing is what it's all about! [Meaning]</p>	<p>C: Asked what have I been up to. She always meets with a hug.</p> <p>R: Athletics conversation went to Manchester</p> <p>J: AM I thinking about continuing climbing after MA</p> <p>R: Well it is a 5+ [Representing labels for meaning]</p> <p>C: Cake + coffee [Social]</p> <p>D: Husband ruffles</p>	<p>C: She slips rope through hands rather than feet [Safety]</p> <p>Shoe spell was rather next to up but part of it! [Identify]</p> <p>Washroom checking [Safety]</p> <p>Rope length for knots is a routine / r/cost - vertical / horizontal. [Personal]</p> <p>R: washing hands after</p>	<p>10/8/17 5-8pm</p> <p>Wall</p> <p>Holds can be challenging challenging overhang [too anxious] or [fear]</p>

Affect: Kindness towards others?

Appendix 5 – Interview Questions

Questions	Possible follow-up questions	probes
<p>1. When did you first start indoor rock climbing?</p> <p>2. Did you take part in any other sports before indoor climbing?</p>	<p>Can you tell me why you first took up indoor climbing?</p> <p>What made you stop?</p> <p>How did this compare to indoor climbing?</p> <p>In your opinion how does indoor climbing compare to outdoor climbing?</p>	<p>Did anything in particular draw you to indoor climbing?</p> <p><i>I believe you often use indoor climbing as training for your outdoor climbing holidays. Can you talk about this further?</i></p> <p>Which do you prefer and why?</p> <p>What are the main similarities and differences of the experience?</p> <p>Is there anything preventing you from doing more outdoor?</p>
<p>3. Can you tell me why you come to this climbing venue?</p> <p>4. Can you tell me what you think is important for a good indoor climbing experience?</p> <p>5. Can you tell me about how you work with your regular indoor climbing group?</p>	<p>What keeps you coming back here?</p> <p>What would you say is the criteria for a good night of indoor climbing?</p> <p>Can you tell me more about this relationship?</p> <p>Can you tell me about the belaying experience when working with a partner here?</p> <p>Does it bother you if someone you're belaying uses the wrong colour holds? Is it cheating?</p>	<p>Do you have a sense of loyalty in coming here?</p> <p>How does indoor climbing make you feel?</p> <p>Does it matter who you climb with?</p> <p>Would you climb with anyone or just someone specifically from your regular group?</p> <p>Do you prefer auto-belays or climbing in the group?</p> <p>Why is this?</p>

<p>6. Are there any other people here that you speak to who you don't climb with?</p> <p>7. Can you tell me about the different styles of indoor climbing wall you use here?</p> <p>8. Can you explain the different holds that are on the wall?</p> <p>9. Can you talk me through an indoor climb you have recently done starting with any preparation?</p>	<p>Does this have an effect on your experience here?</p> <p>Do you have a favourite?</p> <p>How do these effect the climb?</p> <p>Why was it memorable?</p> <p>What makes a good indoor climb?</p> <p>Does indoor climbing give you a sense of identity?</p>	<p>Why is this?</p> <p>How did you feel after?</p> <p><i>You climb both using top roping and lead climbing. Do you have a preference and if so why?</i></p> <p>How does this make you feel?</p>
<p>10. Can you talk me through the equipment that you use to indoor climb and the reasons for using them?</p>	<p>Shoes, Chalk, Rope, Harness, karabiner, Belay device, Sandbag, Drink/food, other</p> <p>Does any of the equipment effect your climbing?</p> <p>Do you have any routines involving the equipment?</p> <p>Would you ever use someone else's equipment and why?</p> <p>How does tying the knots when indoor climbing make you feel?</p>	<p>How important is the equipment for your climbing experience?</p> <p><i>A few months back I saw you on the overhang and while doing a heel hook your shoe came off. And I think you said 'now I'm buggered!' Can you explain why?</i></p> <p><i>I believe you use finger tape, can you explain why?</i></p> <p><i>Is it a different experience to tying knots in outdoor climbing?</i></p>

Appendix 6 – Examples of the interview transcripts Joe (Interview notes 2) and Andy (Interview notes 6)

Joe, Interview notes 2 - Thursday 24th August 2017 – 4:15-5pm

1. When did you first start indoor rock climbing?

50 years ago! Because the school I went to put a wall in there (**ACCESSIBILITY**). They built a new school just before I left so I was 15/16. In Rainham, the Grammar school on the right hand side, there's a football pitch...and our adventure Scouts used to go there, we were based there because our woodwork teacher used to be our adventure scout leader. So I started climbing when I was 16. All it was, was a brick wall with bricks sticking out so it didn't have purpose made holds but it was absolutely cutting edge. It was my first experience climbing indoors.

Because there weren't many around, although I have a feeling the Arethusa centre was open but I didn't used to go there. And that introduction to indoor climbing led me to climbing outdoors which I did. Then I didn't climb back indoors again until I was erm, in my 50's. Not that I had been climbing all that time but in and out of the sport.

Some of my friends I used to kayak with, all of a sudden they started going and they said to me you've climbed before haven't you? Do you fancy coming along? (**FRIENDS**) I did and that's how I got back into the sport and then I drifted out again, as you're aware we had the School build with a purpose build climbing wall and that got me back into it big time really (**ACCESSIBILITY**). I was 55 then. And through that wall I got to know this set up and this really for me...instead of going to the gym 2 or 3 times a week, I do this 2 or 3 times a week instead. So yeah about 55 I was when I really got back into it and not climbing outdoors I must admit.

- Why was that?

Pure and simply because I sold all my gear by then, and I thought to myself can I really be bothered to jump in a car on a Friday night, drive all the way to North Wales or the lakes or the Peak District where we used to climb and the chances are you'd get there and the weather would be lousy, so you couldn't climb anyway...errrm...it's just hassle and I just thought, I'd done all that. I don't need that hassle, I'm going to remain with the indoor environment cos let's face it you can do this 12 months of the year regardless of the weather (**CONVENIENT AND COMFORT - PLACE**) and I think also that the people [2] you tend to climb with and staff [2] that you tend to meet when you get here it's part of the scene as well because quite often you go away to the mountains, half a dozen of you and you might not see anyone else (**SOCIAL**). There's the seclusion aspect of that I suppose which is actually quite nice, but I quite like the closeness and friendliness of this environment (**SOCIAL**).

- Did anything in particular draw you to it?

The weather [3] is the big thing with indoor climbing really (**COMFORT - PLACE**). Well plus the fact I suppose being indoors you end up probably climbing more varied and different routes and especially here because they change the routes on such a regular basis you're never gonna get fed up (**VARIETY**) whereas if you go climbing outdoors for a day and if you do 2 or 3 climbs that's pretty good. But admittedly with outdoor climbing, generally speaking they're always gonna be there [the climbs] so of course they never change so you know its swings and roundabouts I suppose. (**ROUTE CHANGES**)

It is annoying here sometimes when you're working on a difficult climb and all of a sudden it disappears (**ROUTE CHANGES**) because they've changed it [3]. Whereas outdoors that's never going to be an issue. So, if you fail on a climb it's still going to be there 5 years down the line or 10 years down the line. That's going to be the case and it will change very little. So from that respect it is quite nice, but as I say when you go climbing outdoors I suppose generally speaking everything is much taller [3] erm whereas here you might end up doing 15 - 20 climbs during 2 or 3 hours here (**PREDICTABLE**), there's no way you'd be doing that outdoors and that is something, you know, I quite like that, there's success fairly quickly, because you can get to the top fairly quickly and then obviously you can start a new route and hopefully success again, and

you can leave here thinking well I've done 20 routes and I had success maybe 15 times which you wouldn't get outdoors (**ACHIEVEMENT AND SATISFACTION**).

2. Did you take part in any other sports before indoor climbing?

I started climbing first before I was in to kayaking but then the kayaking really took over, and I didn't climb at all. All my spare time was spent kayaking, you know – marathon racing and sprint racing. Erm but then I had problems with my right wrist which basically meant I couldn't feather the paddle properly and put it in the water properly and the boats I was using were pretty tippy boats so you had to have your wits about you, I just kept falling in! and it was around that sort of time that I started to get back into climbing so really because I kept falling in kayaking I thought this is silly and I need to give up really, which is what I did. Fortunately, the wrist problems that I've got don't affect me (**PERSONAL INJURIES OVERCOME**) when I'm climbing and course the other thing that took over as well was from the kayaking was the cycling erm so now it's all cycling and climbing. whereas before generally speaking it was all kayaking, with a little bit of climbing now and again but mainly kayaking. So that's why I had to give up the kayaking.

- How did this compare to indoor climbing?

Yeah, there's that determination [1] to do well and determination to succeed. And certainly as a kayaker and I'm the same cycling really, ideally I want to be in front, I want to win, because at the back I don't really like that. So there's that competitive instinct [1] that I've still got (**COMPETITION**). I had it when I was 15 and I've still got now in my mid 60's. So you can compare I think with different sports, and of course your using different muscle groups erm but yeah the competitiveness [1] of it. I look at the route [3] and think, yeah or look at a particular move and think you no, that's not going to beat me erm and I'm fairly determined that I'm going to crack it, I'm going to do it! (**DETERMINATION**)

- Is this competition with yourself or with others?

Well it can be I mean from a cycling perspective it's with yourself and with others [2] and certainly with the kayaking it's with yourself and others, um, and even here really you see other people do it and you think well they've just done it, if they're a similar build to you um then I think well why can't I do it (**COMPETITION**) um I am aware these days that age has a part to play and you might get somebody of 15, 16, 17 or in your early 20's with the same build as you but of course far more supple than you are and so sometimes I have to face the fact that I'm getting old and I'm not as supple as I used to be and I have to admit defeat sometimes but it bothers me too much of that's the way it is that's the way it is, I just try and do my bit.

- How does indoor climbing compare to outdoor climbing?

Um, I suppose technique wise you learn a lot technique I think indoors and you build up your strength and stamina indoors that you can take to outdoor climbing (**FITNESS**). The only thing I would say of course about outdoor climbing is that there's a lot more, especially if you're lead climbing, is there's a lot more commitment and bottle if you like required because you're placing your own safety equipment which you don't tend to do indoors, you don't rely on that the safety is there automatically really (**SAFETY - VENUE**) for you erm so technique and strength are the two, they run side by side, what you get indoors you can certainly take outdoors. The only other thing outdoors I suppose is things tend to be longer so especially on a longer, so especially on a more difficult climb stamina comes into it, whereas here you know you're able to build up a little bit of stamina but certainly outdoor climbing if you're going on and on and on you need that stamina to continue. But no, I think this gives you a good grounding, a good base for climbing outdoors (**TRANSITION TO OUTDOOR CLIMBING**).

- Do you still see its place as an introduction for climbing outdoors?

Absolutely! Absolutely! Oh yeah I think anybody who climbs inside should try outdoor climbing just to appreciate what they've been missing. And I know it's not everyone's cup of tea but you know have a go at least then if you decide you don't like it, ok, stick to your indoor climbing, nothing wrong with that (**AUTHENTIC**).

- **So as you have already alluded to your preference has changed over the years?**

Oh definitely but only because I suppose when I first started, you know indoor climbing there were very few around, as I say the school I went to, the fact we had a climbing wall that was state of the art, quite a modern thing to have and I must admit that time I don't recall there being any other local schools with a climbing wall.

3. Can you tell me why you come to this climbing venue?

Urm I think maybe I've already said this but friendliness of staff [2], friendliness of the people [2] who come here as well, you know, no-body's afraid to have a little natter with you (**SOCIAL**). If you're doing things wrong no-body's afraid to come up and correct you (**SUPPORT AND ADVICE**). Urm the fact that you never get bored, they change the climbs on a regular basis (**ROUTE CHANGES**), urm so yes it can be frustrating sometimes but you know I'm glad they do that (**FRUSTRATION**). Every month or so you know they're going to be some new climbs to do. That's really I think why I love it (**CHALLENGE**). Also I suppose the little cafe that I tend not to use so much these days, that's quite nice, you can chat to people at the end of the day. I tend to use it more at the weekend if I'm here. So that's quite nice to have that and again that's always has nice, friendly, approachable staff.

4. Can you tell me what you think is important for a good climbing experience?

The friendliness of the staff [2], they're always very approachable. You can talk to them urm and I think that's important in an environment like this. And they're always very safety conscious which I don't think is a bad thing (**STAFF – RESPECT, COMPETENT, SAFE**).

- **What would you say is the criteria for a good night of climbing?**

Urm, if I feel I've stretched myself and I feel suitably tired and suitably knackered I think yeah I worked well today (**CHALLENGE AND PUSHING YOURSELF**). That there were not too many other climbs I could have done tonight. Err, and that to me is a good night, so deep down in my mind I think I couldn't have done anymore.

- **How does climbing make you feel?**

Erm, especially if I'm doing a hard climb, you get a sense of exhilaration (**BUZZ**) and a sense of achievement (**ACHIEVEMENT**). Once again, especially if it's a climb that you've maybe not done before and struggled on before and all of a sudden you do it (**CHALLENGE**). Yeah great sense of achievement.

5. Can you tell me about how you work with your climbing group?

Urm yeah, well most of them I met as climbers at an evening class (run by participant 2) who had never climbed before so they were complete and utter novices urm and I certainly get a great deal of satisfaction out of climbing with them now because I can think back to what they were like when I first met them (**ENCOURAGEMENT**). Err one or two had done a little climbing before but the vast majority hadn't. So to see how they've progressed and to see how you know, there's a few of them now climbing outdoors urm for me it's really good, because you have that satisfaction that you know, you taught them from grassroots, I was going to say I taught them everything they know but that's a slight exaggeration! But that's quite satisfying for me.

- **Can you tell me more about this relationship?**

Well back then there was that teacher – pupil relationship, erm but I always used to treat them on a friendly basis really. Erm but it wasn't until I invited them up here really that they became more of my friends and certainly during the evening sessions, for legally reasons I couldn't climb with them. You know I was there to teach them and instruct them. Whereas in this environment I started to climb with them. Which was quite nice. I got to know them that little bit better, they obviously got to know me as well through that and it gave them the opportunity to talk about them as individuals and I was obviously able to open up a bit more about myself. Whereas you know in the teaching and lecturing type of environment you

tend not to do that, pupil-lecturer type, they didn't call me sir...it was quite informal but yeah it's definitely opened up that.

- **Does it matter who you climb with out of the group?**

I tend to think now...I'm happier climbing with one or two because I know that they are a little bit more aware of what's happening so those that are a bit more aware and a bit more safety conscious I tend to climb with them more, especially from a leading perspective. Urm, you know, some of the older ones that maybe don't pay as much attention as you would want or becoming a little bit hard of hearing from a leading perspective I tend to steer clear of it because I know I can be half way up the climb and say something to one of them and they might not hear me so perhaps I have become a little bit fussy about who I climb with, those that I feel I can really trust. So yes I am selective (**TRUST**).

- **So it's more about safety than ability when climbing with a partner?**

Yeah absolutely, absolutely. Yeah I mean ability really doesn't come into it as far as I'm concerned, I'm quite happy climbing with somebody that maybe is only climbing grades 4 or 5 and that's all they want to do, fine. If they're safe, and they're good at belaying and pay attention all the time to what's going on its not an issue the fact they're not climbing quite as hard, or even if they're climbing harder I mean you know if people start climbing harder than me and they're happy climbing with me, fine. Because again this environment lends itself to that so ability doesn't, I don't think, really comes in to it. (**SAFETY AND TRUST**)

- **What are your thoughts on auto belays or climbing in a group?**

I think auto belays [3] are very good if you just come up here by yourself which I tend to do every now and again, because for one reason or another other people can't make it. Erm with auto belays it's a good way of building up strength and stamina because you don't get an awful lot of rest in between climbs so you have to almost programme yourself to rest I think because within half an hour or an hour max you can be absolutely shot away. Whereas with the group climbing [2], maybe to relax and it's a bit more friendly I suppose you know you've got somebody to have a natter to and so it's a bit more social really (**SOCIAL**). Having said that even on the auto belays you always meet somebody you have a chat to but there doing the same as you so it's going back to the amount of rest, I think if you're going on to the auto belays you know it's one climb, after another climb, after another climb as I say you don't get that rest but you come in here prepared for that, whereas with a group you might climb for 2 or 3 hours, we've already said auto belays an hour, hour and a half max, so its slightly different from that respect (**TECHNOLOGY CHANGES EMBRACED AND FITNESS**).

6. Other than who you climb with is there anyone else you speak to?

Yeah, cos you always tend to meet the same people [2] on a Tuesday and Thursday you get the same people coming in and you get the same when I come up at weekends. You know they're just different people that you might not meet on a Tuesday or Thursday, and so you always have a little natter with them (**SOCIAL**) and then you obviously go off and do your stuff...so yeah.

7. Can you tell me about the different styles of climbing wall you use here?

Yeah depending on what you're doing I suppose, but you have walls [3] that are 90 degrees to the ground urm you've got other walls that are slabs. Urm with a 20 or 30 degree fall away from the vertical and then you have others that are extremely overhanging. And I enjoy climbing on all of them because it's all slightly different technique (**VARIETY AND CHALLENGE**), I suppose if I've got a preference it's the walls that are 90 degrees from the floor and the overhanging walls, I tend to spend most of my time on there, not so much on the slabs erm but that's just my own personal preference. You know, I would climb on all 3 but if I had to choose its vertical and overhanging walls that throw out more of a challenge really, I think that's what it's all about, the slab walls they tend to be very small holds but I don't see it as such a challenge.

8. Can you talk to me about the different climbing holds on the wall?

Yeah certainly with the slabs [3], the holds tend to be a lot smaller because of the angle of the wall, you know your more inclined to almost rest on the wall, so things tend to be smaller compared to the

overhanging walls [if] things are too small erm you need superhuman strength to hang up there and although some of the better climbers that are climbing high grades you sometimes see them using quite small holds...to get a complete climb with such small holds, in this environment anyway, indoor climbing, is rare so on the overhanging walls your on things tend to be a generally a bit bigger and there easier to hang onto as far as fingers are concerned (**INCLUSIVE ABILITY**), but obviously its upper body strength so arms tend to play a fair amount...you tend to rely on your arms and the other thing with overhanging walls is it's tempting sometimes to not use your feet so you're hanging around on your arms which is a big mistake so try and use your feet urm and follow up with your feet and use your arms and keep in contact with the wall and sometimes [this can]be an issue...but if you are going to gain success you need to keep feet in contact with the wall at all times when you're doing anything overhanging. Um, walls that are 90 degrees to the floor, you kind of get a bit of a mixture really, of big juggy holds you can hang around on all day, again slight exaggeration perhaps. And you get little holds as well so there tends to be quite a mixture on 90 degrees to the floor. So that in my opinion is quite good because your mixing the types of holds you'd get in a slab with ones you'd get on a big overhanging wall (**VARIETY**). Plus, the fact here you come across, certainly the walls that are 90 degrees to the floor, you know you come across volumes and features you get on the wall which can add a little more spice to the climb so it's not as though you're just climbing up you know a 90 degree wall, there can be little sections that are overhanging, or sections that a slabby, but generally most of the climb is 90 degrees to the wall. So I guess that's probably the main differences.

- **In the past you have mentioned that a climb may be mean, challenging, fingery. Can you explain what you meant?**

Well, a mean climb is something a bit challenging [3]. If it's made me work hard and maybe I only just managed to do the climb and only just managed to get to the top, I would quite often say that was a mean climb or a challenging climb (**CHALLENGE**). And obviously fingery as I spoke about early, when you start coming across little holds urm they do tend to be fingery, especially if you're almost hanging on them like you do sometimes on the overhanging routes, and you do think I hope they're not going to last for too long and I hope there is something bigger further up, which sometimes there is and sometimes there isn't.

Especially when you're lead climbing, you don't want it but again it becomes a challenge and you don't like to get beaten (**PUSHING YOURSELF**).

9. **Can you talk me through a memorable climb you have recently done starting with any preparation?**

Well yeah on this big overhanging wall [3] here, I've done it 2 or 3 times now, you know it's quite a hard grade and it sounds awful to say this but at about ¾ of the way up it does get quite fingery and you know you need the strength to pinch the holds and do the moves and the only other person who I've seen attempt that is my climbing partner Simon but he hasn't done it yet [laughs]. And he's 10 years younger than I am and I get a certain amount of satisfaction out of that (**COMPETITION**) but I said to him the other week that with that particular move the wall is still overhanging in that section and I think his long legs play a part in the move because sometimes knees can get in the way. It's one of those moves that if you were a little bit shorter. It's as though that particular series of moves were for set for a slightly shorter climber and me being 5 foot 6 that climbs lends itself to someone of my height whereas as you know Simon is 6 foot 3 or 4 so he's tried it a few times but deep down I feel yeah I've got him! So that climb at the moment sticks in my mind. But having said that of course you get Simon [2] on there and he romps it and I really struggle but we don't talk about those ones! [laughs]. (**COMPETITION**)

10. **Can you talk me through your equipment that you use to climb and the reasons for using them?**

Yeah, first of all working from the bottom up, my shoes [3] erm had lots of different pairs of climbing shoes but a few years ago I came across these Red Chilli's (brand) that I thought they're quite comfortable (**EQUIPMENT - COMFORT**), they're reasonably priced, um and they still make them so from a shoe perspective I stick with the Red Chilli's. Initially, I wondered how would get on because they don't have laces, because of course I was used to having a climbing shoe with laces so I've got 3 Velcro straps on these, but they're fine. And I like them and as I've said they're reasonably priced and if you shop around you can

get them actually quite cheap. My harness [3], I wanted something that was not too heavy weight, I've got 2 harnesses my old harness I've got at home I would tend to use if I ever climbed outdoors again, I would use that, it's very good for alpine and glacier climbing purely and simply because they're a few more gear loops on it for more equipment and it's a thicker more padded webbing which I don't think for indoor climbing you need so it's altogether a heavier harness. The harness I have for indoor climbing is designed for indoor climbing actually, it's got fairly thin lightweight straps but again it's comfortable (**EQUIPMENT - COMFORT**) when you start falling around on it. Perhaps it's time to start looking for another one. I've had that 6 or 7 years now, um, but I have only used it for indoor climbing and it appears to still be in quite good condition. But that's why I use that. My belay device [3] and the karabiner [3], well I've had 2 or 3 types of belay device but all generally speaking the same design and type, um it's not the most expensive on the market but not the cheapest, middle of the range and as far as I'm concerned in this environment it does the job. And likewise the karabiner I use as well. Screw gate karabiner, not a big heavy weight job, so you know, that's my choice there really. My climbing rope, um well, to a certain extent with that I bought it from the local shop here, I knew what I wanted. Its single rope environment here so I didn't need twin ropes, um I bought a 30 meter rope which indoors is fine. If I was outdoors I'd want one twice as long but chances are outdoors I'd climb with a twin rope which tend to be thinner and a lot longer so you wouldn't use that for indoors. The one I've got is ok for indoor climbing, ok for lead climbing. You could use it outdoors on short climbs but 30 meters it restricts you greatly. Um but from a clothing [3] perspective I tend to climb in shorts, t-shirt during the summer. In the winter, tracksuit bottoms t-shirt, jumper but all loose fitted clothing, nothing that is going to restrict my movement. And sometimes a hat in the winter because it's not that warm. (**EQUIPMENT – SAFETY AND EQUIPMENT - SIMPLE**)

- **How does the equipment effect your climbing?**

Well I think you need to be comfortable [3] (**EQUIPMENT - COMFORT**). As I've said with the shoes, I've tempted to go down the road of using the same shoes for many a year because I know they don't cripple your feet like some of them do. They tend to fit my feet quite well and I don't think they affect my climbing, so I think being comfortable is really the main thing so of course you like to think that buying modern day climbing equipment that it's all going to be safe (**EQUIPMENT - SAFETY**). You have to be happy with it, like the belay devices there are lots and lots on the market but I'm happy with mine and it does the job and I think that's the bottom line really, if you're happy with what you've got and it does what you want it to do without having to spend mega bucks, err then great, I tend to think that I have moved with the times I mean when I think to some of the earlier belay devices, one of which I still have at home, you know, I don't think I'd use that anymore because technology has changed for the better and certainly modern day belay devices are far better than they were 20 – 30 years ago and likewise with shoes have come on leaps and bounds, not that I have any shoes at home I was wearing 20-30 years ago but I think to move on with the times with equipment that you can afford to buy and you are happy with and safe with that's it really. (**TECHNOLOGY CHANGES EMBRACED**)

There's no point in buying equipment if you don't know how to use it, having said that if you do end up in that position it's important, it goes back to the friendly staff here, it's important you ask them – how do I use this? What's the best way to use this? So there's always people to ask for advice [2]. (**STAFF - RESPECT**)

You could buy cheaper shoes [3], as Jim did a few months ago, and then decide you didn't like them, they weren't performing as well as his other shoes so again like a lot of things, you get what you pay for. So I'd be loathed to get anything cheaper um I might one day have to look at a similar shoe if they stopped making them or something maybe a little more expensive but I'm not sure I'd go down the road of spending £20 or £30 on a pair of shoes because they're not going to perform.

I think shoes are probably the most important thing because you are wearing them all the time – on the climb, and obviously you could say the same about harness but if your bouldering the harness from a safety perspective is not worn, it's just your shoes so shoes are probably the most important thing. (**EQUIPMENT - PERSONAL**)

- **Do you have any rituals/habits when climbing with the equipment?**

Erm, no not really, you could argue I suppose that the only ritual I do is err a ritual I do before I even jump in the car up here cos I tend to always make sure I have a good meal at lunchtime so 1 - 2 o' clock, and then if I'm jumping in the car around 4 to come up here, I'll first sit down and have a cup of tea! I suppose you could say that was a ritual. But once I get up here erm I tend to I think put my harness on first, because I know my shoes, its contradictory to what I've said really, but my shoes [3] are a little uncomfortable, not quite the same as wearing a pair of carpet slippers or a pair of trainers, so they tend to be the last thing I put on. So I put my harness on first, I then tend to fill up my chalk bag with chalk um and then I put my shoes on and then at the end of the session I tend to empty my chalk bag back into the polythene bag I keep in my rucksack so it doesn't go anywhere and then I take my harness off, so I suppose there is a little ritual and I do tend to do that in more or less the same order but other than that no.

- **Any pre-climbing routines?**

No, all I tend to do, I've never been one for warming up and stretching but I do tend to go for easier climbs and you do a few of those so you warm into it gently, I tend to do that and at the end of the session um you know I'm probably climbing climbs that are stretching me but not quite hard, but I tend not to at the end of the session go onto the easy climbs and climb down, I tend to think no, I can't do this anymore, um that's it and I call it a day.

The harder climbs, believe it or not I never used to use chalk [3] at all, um don't ask me why I just never got into it, perhaps all the other stuff I'd done outside didn't use it um but then I saw all these other people use it, then I started using it and one thing has led to another and on the harder climbs it definitely helps because you know I haven't got terribly sweaty hands but on the harder climbs it definitely helps to dry out the palms of your hands and get rid of some of the sweat. **(EQUIPMENT - PERSONAL)**

- **Would you ever use someone else's equipment?**

Um, I would only use someone else's rope if I knew the history of it. um I would use somebody else's belay device and karabiner err cos that's not such an issue, but harness – definitely not. And shoes well again I suppose I would because I remember on one occasion coming up here and for some reason I left mine at home so I hired a pair of shoes so really I suppose the only thing I'm saying I wouldn't use is harness as I say with the rope I need to know where it's been. **(EQUIPMENT - SAFETY AND EQUIPMENT - FAMILIAR)**

From a safety point of view you never know what people have been doing with the ropes, how many people have fallen on it you know some people do use their ropes outdoors as well, um and have people been treading on it and shape stones as well, I'd want to know the history of the rope, especially if I'm lead climbing on it. and likewise, with the harness, you don't know how people are storing it and how people are keeping it so there could be internal damage that you cannot see at first glance. **(EQUIPMENT - SAFETY AND EQUIPMENT - FAMILIAR)**

- ***I notice you often wear 'The Reach' branded t-shirts. Can you tell me a little about that? Why?***

I think it's just nice to promote the climbing wall and people can see if you're wearing a t-shirt like that you must be a fairly regular customer because without doubt some people here maybe only come up here once or twice and for whatever reason they don't like it or move on, so it's a way of me promoting [1] the wall and even to the extent that I wear them outdoor sometimes **(IDENTITY - INDIVIDUAL AND SPORT IDENTITY)** and people have commented on it like – 'where is that?' or 'I fancy a go at indoor climbing' and that's happened before and when I explain how close it is to the Medway Towns and Gillingham they say 'oh yeah perhaps I'll come up there' whether they do, I don't know, probably not as I tend not to see them again um but you know it's a bit of a conversation starter I think so that's why I tend to buy them, similar to the drinks bottle I think, my other one was looking a bit tatty, and in a way your supporting the people that run the wall, and they're very good at putting the money they earn from it back into the environment and trying to make it better for everybody, so I think that helps out as well cos let's face it, it's a privately run wall you its owned by 2 or 3 people, there's no franchise connected to it, so I just think if I can support [1] the little man if you like, that's good, that's good.

- **Like a loyalty?**

Yeah I think so [1], again, not that you see them here very often but they're very friendly and never afraid to have a chat, and it's nice to support them because it was a bit of a gamble for them to buy this place and opening it all up but it's been a great success, absolutely. (**LOYALTY IN PLACE**)

- **Do you enjoy the identity when wearing the t-shirt outside of here?**

Yeah I think so, yeah, yeah [1]. And as I say people do comment on it um and sometimes you even get people you know that I've never seen up here before say 'I've climbed up there'. But then sometimes, it's rare but if I climb at another venue wearing it, you get a bit of stick for wearing it which I don't mind, if I go to the scout climbing wall in Maidstone when I'm wearing my Reach t-shirt they sometimes comment on it but as I say it's all tongue and cheek, it's all friendly stuff.

- **Like rival football teams?**

Yeah absolutely, it's exactly the same!

Follow up recording with Joe

- Is there a sixth sense when belaying with a regular climbing partner?

Um yes definitely because you built up a trust I think with your climbing partner and you get to know their weaknesses and strengths, um and certainly from a falling off perspective and eventually one has to fall off when you're climbing don't you, and I have had it before people haven't held me and I've actually hit the floor, admittedly not indoors but climbing outdoors and I don't climb with those people anymore. So you do build up a bit of a trust relationship with them I think and all the time, especially when you're on a tricky move you think well I could come off here, but you know that your partner's going to hold you and I think that's quite important, so yeah (**BOND – SIXTH SENSE**).

If I'm climbing with somebody that I don't know particularly well from a belaying perspective, I don't think I push myself quite as hard as I would do because all the time in the back of my mind you think they look ok, and generally speaking I'm sure they are but you've got that thought all the time – are they going to actually hold me when the chips are down? (**BOND – SIXTH SENSE**).

- Does it bother you if someone your belaying uses the wrong colour holds?

Um I wouldn't say it really bothers me but I just think what grates me sometimes is that you see people do these climbs and they cheat and when they get to the top it's like – I've done it! and you think no you haven't, and that I find little annoying. Well tonight has been a classic, I mean I've cheated a few times but I'm very aware that I've done it and I don't at the end of the day say I've done that climb because I know I've cheated (**FAIRNESS/HONESTY**). So as we used to say on years gone by – you're only cheating yourself. But it is a way I suppose that bypasses a particularly hard move and then in weeks to come revisit it and think like right this is the bit where I had to cheat last time (**CHEATING**). I don't like to see people cheat.

- What are your opinions on the auto-belay?

I think with the auto-belay devices they are a good way of building stamina, um cos as you've rightly said before you don't often get a lot of rest. Um and the other thing with an auto-belay device is you can't cheat on it, your belayer can't give you a tight rope and pull you up the climb! So if there was anything tricky and you came off, that's it your off and lowered to the ground. So, I think they're quite a good training device providing they're used properly – clip in properly and you give the device time to work for you so yeah (**FITNESS AND SAFETY - VENUE**).

There is a safety factor for sure, people climbing not properly clipped in or not clipped in at all in some cases so you need to be aware of that but here, they're well labelled I think so the chance of making a mistake here are I think are slim, but as we know mistakes happen. **(FITNESS AND SAFETY - VENUE)**

- Do you have a preference of auto-belays or group climbing?

I'd rather climb with a group really. I've got back into the habit of coming up either Saturday or Sunday in the last couple of weeks to use the auto-belays which is ok to do perhaps once a week, but to climb like that all the time, no I don't really I'd like it. It's nice to have the rapport with somebody else – wind each other up, give each other a bit of stick on the climb **(SOCIAL)**. Having said that there is always else to talk to [within the auto-belay area] so that helps but I still prefer climbing with somebody else.

- Do you think the indoor walls simulate the outdoor environment?

Um no I don't think it simulates the outdoor environment because pure and simply because on the indoor environment you're almost told where to put your hands and feet on the colour. Whereas outdoors the rock face is in front of you and where you put your hands and feet is entirely up to you. So I don't think you can compare the two. But having said that I think this is a good training environment to be in for giving you the strength and endurance to climb outdoors but comparing the two is a mistake. **(FITNESS)**

Although they try to copy the feature to get outdoors, they're still strategically placed aren't they? and that's the thing. And being that little bit shorter I often think if only there was a hold 6 inches lower and I'm sure outdoors there probably would be something a bit lower. It might not be the main hold outdoors but there is often an alternative whereas in this environment, there isn't, you stick to the colours and don't cheat – you have to go for the holds and go for the moves **(AUTHENTIC)**

- What feeling does tying the knot give you?

Yeah, I still go back to basics of making sure I've got enough rope to tie it, once I've done the initial figure of 8 I'm thinking all the time, making sure I feed it into my harness correctly and then making sure I've gone along the path of the original knot, hence its name rethreaded. And then I always make sure I've got enough tail at the end of the rope to do a stopper knot and there are two schools of thought there – where some people say well as long as you've got a long tail there's no need to do a stopper knot, but being old school um I still think I'd rather leave enough tail, do that stopper knot um and reinforcing the knot and hopefully preventing it from coming undone **(SAFETY ROUTINES)**. So yeah I go through the same thought pattern from when I first tied it in 1820 or whenever it was! [safety] is at the forefront of my mind all the time **(SAFETY)**

1. When did you first start indoor rock climbing?

That's a very good questions, I'll have to think about that...going on 3 years now? Err yeah say 3 years.

- Can you tell me why you first took up indoor climbing?

Funnily enough it was just because Dad was doing it (**ENCOURAGEMENT**). I'd come back from Australia and that was literally it, they were already doing it so he said come along have a go and that's why I'm here now.

- Did anything in particular draw you to indoor climbing?

I've always liked mountaineering as a thing anyway. So there's that aspect of it, it fits in with all those kind of sports and I just like the technical aspects of it as well I suppose like body mechanics and all that kind of thing, I've always liked extreme sports like BMXing, skating and mountaineering and stuff so it just kind of fits in from those perspectives I suppose. (**INCLUSIVE ABILITY**)

- Can you tell me more about the body mechanics?

Yeah so, it's all the weight distribution and like technique rather than brute strength. Almost like a martial arts sort of thing bordering on...it's hard to explain...rather than brute force. And I don't like team based sports, I've always liked the man vs mountain (**CHALLENGE**) thing it's about personal conditioning rather than winning a league, it's about reaching your potential.

- Like your personal best?

Well that's like an underlying thing with all sports and like a centre piece of climbing, there is no other point to it (**ACHIEVEMENT**), I suppose you could do the competition circuit but even then, it's just demonstrating your own personal abilities and condition, so I think that's why I'm drawn to mountain based sports anyway because it's just you versus nature, that's the only adversary in it.

- And in here are you able to transfer the nature part to the artificial?

Yeah, absolutely. (**AUTHENTIC**)

- What do you mean by the martial arts bit?

Yeah so it's about having the mental aspect and the physical aspect to it, and confidence and about keeping your cool and also like understanding of technique and like flow and stuff. If you just brute force it you won't get as good results than if you...[inaudible]...get in tune with your body rather just getting massive and strong kind of thing. (**FITNESS**)

2. Did you take part in any other sports before indoor climbing?

Erm ish, I've always done skating and BMXing and things of that nature. More recently I've started mountain biking but that was after I started climbing, so not particularly.

- Would you class this as your main activity?

Yeah, it's one of my main 4 hobbies I guess now.

Mountain biking, Climbing, programming and guitar.

- Now you've done a little bit of outdoor climbing haven't you?

Yes not as much as I'd like but I've done some. (**CONVENIENT**)

- Which do you prefer?

Yeah see people always do this but I'm just not from that kind of mind, people always go cats or dogs and I'm like both? Both have their merits, I see advantages of both. For me it's a richer life if you explore all of

the options, it's not one or the other I see benefits the same way, I like rope climbing but I like bouldering as well. Everyone's like either or? and I'm like, both? Can I have both is that allowed so for me I like the variety, more different things to do, rather than any personal preference of one over the other. (**VARIETY**)

- **So do you get different things from say indoor/outdoor climbing?**

Yeah, I mean indoor is just about the climbing (**AUTHENTIC**) I suppose whereas outdoor you have the environment and the additional risk I suppose as well so yeah outdoor is more days out, expeditions I suppose, indoor is more training oriented (**TRAINING**). But I still find...like that's fine with me, it's still like a challenge (**CHALLENGE**), it's not like going to the gym where you're doing your reps and you go, there's still like targets and still different grades and things and still pushing that and trying and learning new things all the time (**PROGRESS**). There's lots to gain from both really.

- **What would you say about the access of indoor and outdoor climbing?**

Well indoors is way more easier to access (**ACCESSIBILITY AND CONVENIENT**) like you just turn up and hire some stuff and then someone can show you how to do it. Whereas outdoor you kind of already need to know kind of lot...you need to be confident enough, vaguely know what you're doing before you go but then how do you figure that out without going? Also requires you to plan a trip and to get everyone else to go with you, and it's all a lot of planning (**INCONVENIENT LOCATION**). Whereas, especially bouldering you can just turn up, hire a pair of shoes borrow a chalk bag and you're ready to go, that's it! It's definitely a lower barrier to entry for indoor which is why people start with it I guess. (**ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE**)

- **Do you see it as training for outdoor or a sport in its own right?**

Both. It obviously does work as training for the outdoor, it has more of a training like environment. It has all routes in one location to treat purely like training but it's also more than that for me it's a sport itself indoor climbing and a lot of people would agree with that I think, there are indoor climbing competitions and stuff with people that only indoor climb and that is their sport. Again it's the same thing people think one or the other, black or white but for me I don't think it needs to be, it can be both. You can do the outdoor climbing and the indoor climbing as a sport, they kind of go hand in hand and support each other, there's definitely merit as a sport of its own [indoor climbing]. (**AUTHENTIC**)

- **How does previous sports you've done compare to indoor climbing?**

Err that's a very good question actually. There does seem to be some underlying connection between all the things that I do even the non-sport stuff, like my approach to music and programming it's all quite similar (**INCLUSIVE ABILITY**). Like bouldering would be the programming of the climbing world, of the mountaineering world which is why I'm drawn to that, like the technical aspects of it, the complexity of it, the problem solving side of things which is why I'm drawn to climbing so much (**PROBLEM SOLVING**) rather than hiking, although I do enjoy hiking it just doesn't have the same draw I'd always probably rather be climbing or hiking to a climb at least. So there is some kind of connection there and there's the technique and intellect over brawn kinda thing as well, fluidity and elegance and utilising technique rather than brute force so there is that underlying thing to it as well.

3. Can you tell me why you come to this climbing venue?

Variety mostly is how I ended up here, it's just a lot bigger than anywhere else nearer (**VARIETY AND CONVENIENT**). I mean most of the places in Kent has like 4 lines, it's just rope climbing. You have bouldering place a bunch of times and I do enjoy that, again it's just bouldering but here you just have everything so it's worth the extra travel for that, cos you've got the bouldering, training room, lead ropes, overhangs, slabs, auto belays and everything (**VARIETY**). I guess part of it came from Dad going to the adult education class with everyone so it's kind of they've got their friends [2] here which kind of helps but I think we'd still come here either way. (**SOCIAL**)

- **So was you involved in the Arethusa climbing as well?**

Not when they were doing it regularly but I have been there a few times. On the odd occasion I've been there.

This place definitely has more atmosphere like it feels like a proper community here, you see the same people here. You have the group we actually climb with and there's a bunch of little groups you see and always bumping into them and chat to them it comes with the size of it again (**SOCIAL AND CHALLENGE**), there's a lot more people here, a lot more climbs here and therefore you get a lot stronger community. And the climbing is a bit different [at Arethusa] err I think the thing the Arethusa, the outside wall, which is badly maintained because of the bad design of the wall so it's a bit dilapidated outside, holds come off but they can't do anything about it. It has these thick spots for putting the holds into and yeah, the indoor is again a lot smaller, a little bouldering place and a little indoor bit but yeah, it's just not much. It's mainly the size here that makes the difference.

- **Do they change the routes often at Arethusa?**

No, not very often at all. I mean the outside they can't change them at all. (**PROGRESS**) Yeah I can't say I've been there frequently enough to know exactly how often but I know they do change them here at a particularly high rate. By the time they've been around the whole building they've got back to the beginning again, that's the thing. The same with us as well, if they were to change every single climb overnight it would take us months to get around them all (**ROUTE CHANGES**), that means they've got more time to change them again.

- **Do you have a sense of loyalty in coming here?**

Ah definitely, absolutely, hands down, like the community aspect of it, that same kind of community atmosphere is shared by the staff and what not. So like there is a certain loyalty [1]. If we were to here that it was going under we'd take some kind of action to try and help. I feel like practically everyone who comes here feels similarly about it. you do start to build that loyalty towards the place. (**LOYALTY**)

4. Can you tell me what you think is important for a good indoor climbing experience?

Erm clip in [laughs]. The social aspect is a big part (**SOCIAL**) um obviously just having a good workout (**CHALLENGE**), that helps and pushing grades, pushing yourself, doing something you wouldn't have done before (**PUSHING YOURSELF AND VARIETY**). Overcoming confidence, if you try something that was out of your ability range...and say come on lets have go, its liberating, problem solving, actually progressing, that's a big part of it progression, feeling like you're actually moving along all the time, so that's good. (**ESCAPE, PROBLEM SOLVING AND PROGRESS**)

That's what actually makes it more satisfying by doing the things that you were otherwise going to avoid (**ACHIEVEMENT**). Yeah and I think that all ties back to the rest of your life, it's like a microcosm of life in general. I don't know if you've looked into the psychology of willpower at all? That willpower [1] is a depletable resource but then [inaudible] the bigger our reservoir of willpower gets so you're eventually pushing yourself in certain aspects of life, you gives you a closed environment where you can push yourself but it doesn't really matter as long as you don't hurt yourself there's nothing swinging on it, you're not going to end your life if you don't make that climb, or ruin your marriage, but its invigorating when you get some value from that by pushing yourself even though the overarching purpose – well there isn't really one. Like pushing yourself is just healthy its good for you, it actually helps apply yourself in things you don't want to, but have to and it's also the choice of that I suppose like coming here and pushing yourself and feeling good about that the fact that you've chose to do that, like I could be just at home watching TV but instead I'm climbing upside-down.

- **How does climbing make you feel?**

Um well like I say invigorating (**ENERGISED**)...good! I mean always on the way here Dad and I, one or both of us will be quite tired, life is tough! (**ESCAPE**) But on the way home we're always really perky, it gets your blood flowing and wakes you up, move your body and everything. And it's the added bonus of like it's going to the gym but not boring. It's like – I can have fun and be doing exercise (**FITNESS**) because a lot of things in life are not that easy – you can either have something that tastes nice or you can have something that's good for you! Or can do something fun or do something good for you! Whereas this has that nice bonus of being fun and good for you, that's refreshing!

5. Can you tell me about how you work with your regular climbing group?

So as mentioned there is sense of community (**SOCIAL**) and it's nice when people [2] come together on ideas but especially one that's abstract, not political or religious ideas – they're always so serious and divisive, so when you come here it's like ah you like to come climbing? me to! And that's it, that's all there has to be to it (**SOCIAL**). I think that's the same for all the mountaineering and things, a great sense of community, you already know in advance that you have that one thing in common. That you just love the climbing, or the mountains or whatever. That's all that you need. It does seem for whatever reason to draw nice people, I don't know why, I don't know what it is about it but I've always found the crowd once you get deeper into the person and start talking about politics or anything like that I've only met absolutely lovely people from climbing (**FRIENDS**). I don't think I've ever met anyone who's been bigoted or anything like that ever in climbing, just nice people and I think that comes from the same thing – the point of it, clearly there's something that draws people to it, that you have to be of a certain mindset and you find like-minded people here I guess.

- Was you expecting for the social side to come with it?

Not particularly, only like with my Dad it's a nice excuse to hang out with him. I'd been out of the Country for 3 years erm so I hadn't seen him much so it started with that but you could never guess. Like with hindsight it made sense with doing mountaineering before and experienced that sort of sense of social community but yeah it should have been obvious before but I didn't realise, yeah. (**SOCIAL**)

- With the other people in the group how does it work for buddying up to belay?

We just end up pairing up in a certain way but just by our outside standings with each other, like Claire comes with Jim and climb together because they were friends before. I climb with Dad because outside of this we are a pair, but sometimes it changes up there's no set rule, like I've climbed with Simon, Dave, you a little bit...so there's no real set rule to it, it just ends up a certain way you just get used to people and allows you to think less about the belayer if it's the same one each time. You just get use to one and they get used to you. (**BOND – CLIMBING PARTNERS**)

- How do you mean it's less to think about?

Well I suppose there's like a trust bond (**TRUST**) and as much as someone's a good climber and you can tell someone's a good belayer [2], you have to experience it for yourself before you can have 100% faith in the person (**TRUST**). It's like someone could be climbing for 20 years but you're still going to be nervous if trying something a bit out of your comfort zone (**TRUST**) whereas if someone's been belaying you 150 times before and you've fallen tons of times and what not, then that's the person I want on the other end when I'm trying something that I'm not entirely comfortable with. It's not that having another person is a problem it's just another thing on your mind (**TRUST**) it's hard not to think about it sometimes, if I'm on a hard part I could be like oh no I'm going to fall – yep Dad's going to catch me but with someone else I'd be like – are they though? It's that small fraction of doubt, but they always do but...

- Your Dad can probably read your climbing too?

Yeah. (**BOND - SIXTH SENSE**)

- What about when you are belaying someone for the first time?

I probably pay more attention when belaying someone else! (**SAFETY**)

- Rather than you poor old Dad?!

[laughs] Again you get used to kind of thing, you get used to the pace and communication that's a big part of it as well. (**BOND - SIXTH SENSE**)

Well dad and I usually announce if we can before anything happens. So, it's like 'I'm done' and the other person goes 'ok' then I lean back. But other people have different approaches like they get to the top and let go, and while that works we're just used to that level of communication (**SAFETY ROUTINE -**

COMMUNICATION) and like you said with the noises I know what it sounds like when Dad's struggling. **(BOND - SIXTH SENSE)** So I probably pay less attention when he's on it [laughs] but you just get used to it.

- **Maybe a 6th sense?**

Yeah like not in a dangerous way, just a comfortable, just used to how it all goes, almost feel through the rope if he's struggling **(SAFETY ROUTINE - COMMUNICATION)** and that kind of thing. All subtle nuances that we might not realise when watching people belay that there's so many little bits to it.

Also I suppose the direction as well, when you're really struggling it's the belayer you look to help you out – you're like where do I go? And they're like left! Left! When you get used to each other as well **(BOND – CLIMBING PARTNERS)**, like I wouldn't suggest a massive reach to my Dad, I would suggest to do it like I'd do it because I just know he won't, but he's good at smearing so I'd be like maybe try smearing. So there's that aspect as well. You do get used to people's climbing styles and do spotting for each other and that kind of thing as well. **(SUPPORT AND ADVICE)**

- **Give me your opinion on auto-belays**

They're useful, quite an interesting thing cos it completely removes your ability to lean on the rope **(FITNESS)**, whether you want to or not, you have to do everything in one go. And as I said last week we could use it as a tool to warm up cos we could speed through warm up process by the 3 of us simultaneously climb 5 or 6 climbs and then we can get stuck into some meatier climbs together. They're very functional and useful and good for training and I wish I lived nearer to here cos I'd definitely come down here an hour a day and run up and down the walls like in an hour you can do 15 climbs on one of those and be completely exhausted so if I lived closer I would be using that.

You don't have the crutch of being able to rest, if you're going to push grades on auto-belays that's hard, really hard! Cos normally when we're like a 6c or something I'll take 3 or 4 rests and the whole point is to do all the moves whether I do them all in one go or not but the auto-belay – tough! which has its advantages and disadvantages I suppose, if you stick to that it would train you to become a better endurance climber but at the same time you might not have as good technique because you haven't been able to isolate movements. Like you can't go how do you do that move, right I'm just going to walk up, stay here and try this move 10 times **(FITNESS)**, it's like no your back at the bottom so you've got to do it again, you can't rest, you have to stay on the wall so yeah good for endurance but probably bad for pushing specific moves or training for specific movements, again it comes down to variety, everything has its place together like I wouldn't choose one or the other, I wouldn't want to get rid of auto-belays or vice-versa. Pros and Cons and value in both.

- **Does it bother you if someone you're belaying uses the wrong colour holds?**

No. you can do that if you want. It's a very personal thing **(PERSONAL ENDEAVOUR)**. I say like, it's probably more fun when you're both tackling the same climbs, err like discussing, trying to defeat the climb together **(ACHIEVEMENT)** but realistically it's all personal - your climb, your thing, you do what you want. If you want to use all the colours **(PERSONAL ENDEAVOUR)** and at the end of the day if that's what you need to get up, that's the most important thing but yeah there is fun in having the person just fail at that point [rather than going on a wrong colour] so you can both be like ah how do you get past that point? By not using a different colour it like – what's the move? It starts off a dialogue, a conversation. I suppose if your trying to push yourself and the other person climbing with has no interest in pushing themselves and every time it gets hard they're like – ah just skip it then I guess over time that might get a bit annoying **(SUPPORT AND ADVICE)**, I don't really know because Dad and I both do quite a lot of pushing.

- ***I've observed that you are good discussing the climbs and giving advice to others. Do you see this as an important part of yours and others climbing experience?***

Yeah absolutely and that actually is one of my favourite parts of that community **(SUPPORT AND ADVICE)** thing I've found is that willingness to share information. Actually, like I said early about all my hobbies having similarities, its actually one of those things that all of those – music, programming and climbing share is that for some reason or another the people that learn a lot and spend a lot of time doing it are

happy and willing to share that information with you, there's no defensiveness with it. Any programmer will talk to you all day about something if you let them and the same for climbing, like every climber wants to talk about...if they can do a climb you can't no-ones like - oh he's asking me about that climb, it's like well what you need to do is throw this heel over there and do that but it's really hard...so there's a love for sharing that information so there's a lot of that **(SUPPORT AND ADVICE)**

I've actually found in the bouldering gym, probably because I've climbed there alone more, random people would just come and chill and yell things at you and I just find that great! **(SOCIAL)** Like I've been there before really struggling to reach a thing and I've gone for it, slipped off and gone back to where I was before, and I'm just back to give up and some random person just goes - no that's the move mate, go on, go on, you've got this! Then you do that move and there like - throw the left up, then you fall off and they're like ah good attempt though! And I'm like - who are you? [laughs] I haven't met you before in my life! But I find that the lovely thing about it **(CHALLENGE, SUPPORT AND ADVICE)**

6. Are there any other people here that you speak to who you don't climb with?

Oh yeah there's loads of people knocking around **(SOCIAL)**, for a start there's the staff, we talk to all the staff a lot and get on with them really well. Had a lot of discussions about climbing and non-climbing things with them. And there's various other groups; there's a couple of dudes that everyone refers to as the brothers - I'm not actually sure if they are brothers, they just have the same haircut or lack of hair! There's the European guy and girl that's always here, there's Rob, that's one of the guys that climbs with NICAS and we bump into a few times and there's a bunch others as well, just people you see all the time and quite often end up talking to them so that's quite an encouraging thing, it's that community thing **(SOCIAL)**. And Ramona [laughs - we joke Richard has a crush on the girl in the café].

7. Can you tell me about the different styles of indoor climbing wall you use here?

Yeah I can do that. Well I'm a glutton for punishment, I have a habit of looking at climbs and thinking - oh that looks horrible - let's do that one! **(CHALLENGE)** So erm in particular the overhang wall and marathon wall in front of us would be two of the ones, just because they are of obscene difficulty **(CHALLENGE)** that I can barely scratch the surface of them at the moment, I mean I can attempt some on both walls and finished a couple on the overhang wall but not much [laughs] there's still like 90% of the wall that's completely way out of my skill level at this point which is the encouraging kind of thing for me **(IMPROVEMENT)**. I'm attracted to them cos there's somewhere to go, there's head room...I like the journey. It's a good bench mark as well cos I know that the day I'm doing any c's [term used to describe the grading] on the overhang wall is the day I'm a better climber than I am now [laughs]. Then the variety plays a big part, you have those obscene new difficult bits, quite a few different slabs, those slightly leaning back walls we we're playing on a couple of weeks ago, and overhanging, so it's the variety **(VARIETY)** there's just all the different kinds of walls you can think of. And I really enjoy all the bouldering stuff although we don't do it much here erm you've got the zoo [name of the bouldering area] and all the roof climbing stuff, its mainly the variety like I've said before.

- ***Previously I've heard you use the term 'knarly' to describe a move, and then I heard your Dad use the same term. How would you describe this shared use of language?***

He's probably picked that up from me to be honest! [laughs]

- ***Is there a cultural side to using this term?***

Oh yeah, absolutely a lot of it I don't even get! Some people are in deep but there is a whole vocabulary, if you ever want a laugh there's a video called things climbers say which basically encapsulates the whole thing.

It's kind of horrible in a good way is what knarly means to me, it's like ah that's really difficult and really unenjoyable but I want to do it more! It's like a double-edged word.

8. Can you talk to me about the different indoor climbing holds on the wall?

Well I suppose there's like...you have strengths and weaknesses obviously and height is normally quite big one and there's certain moves that other people struggle with and as I've said before there's certain moves, like with my upper body strength I suffer so if it's all in my shoulders, I really struggle and that's why I'm not very good with the overhangs. Whereas quite fingery moves and big weight shifting moves I seem to be alright with. But yeah it does really change the problem with it, the different types there's a whole variety of it, like if there was one really crimp hold really does change it compared to if there was a nice big handle there (**VARIETY**), and it is quite amazing how much difference if you didn't know there was a hold there and someone's like oh there's that hold that you've been ignoring for ages (**SUPPORT AND ADVICE**) and you're like oh! And it completely changes the whole thing. I do tend to be drawn to things that look hard, so too often I'm like those holds look horrible – tie on then! [laughs]

See I struggle with those jugs that's the thing. I think because I'm a guitarist and programmer my forearm strength is decent, but jugs actually use a lot more of your shoulder and upper arm which I don't have much strength in so I would actually prefer a solid edged fingery hold, I think I do better on those...I tire faster on the jugs, it's cos like an open hand grip strength occurs more further up [on his arm] whereas when you're using your fingers, you're using your forearms more, it might just be better technique also, I may have better technique on the smaller holds.

- *I've seen you attempt climbs that no-one else could do it. Can you explain the motivation doing this?*

Yep like I say I'm a glutton for punishment!

I'm just self-destructive in a good way I think [laughs] I think I just like to be defeated rather than decide cos then, it takes a little bit away from you. You'll see when we finish climbing I'll quite often go and do some bouldering even though it might seem mad from the outset but I like to fail to say right I'm physical incapable now of doing anything, I've been defeated and then I push myself (**PUSHING YOURSELF**). It's like when I went on my mountain bike holiday recently for me that giant bruise that I got is proof that I tried hard enough, I'm content, I'm glad of falling off rather not falling off at all than spending the whole time nervous about falling off. It wouldn't have been as rewarding as going screw it and falling off and being like well I definitely gave it a proper go, I definitely went out my comfort zone because I was mildly terrified at points and I failed at other points and you know you've actually pushed and then I can be content.

- **Has that badge of honour (e.g. bruising) ever occurred in indoor climbing?**

Yeah I used to bleed all the time, I'm just a better climber than I used to be [laughs], last week my finger bled a bit and I was like I haven't actually bled for months and months, yeah long time ago, about a year or two ago I was literally bleeding nearly every session, my elbows or my knees that kind of thing.

I think at first I was thought – yeah I'm pushing myself but later I realised that I was just a bad climber [laughs] and that was it (**IMPROVEMENT**)

9. Can you talk me through a memorable indoor climb you have recently done?

Erm there was one that was actually some time ago, we were doing dyno's at the bouldering gym. I'd always struggled with dynamic movements because I'd always rope climbed which is more statically in generally so it's a different style and one of the guys I was climbing with was egging me on and winding me up in a way because I could do a few moves that he couldn't do before and even though I'd say he was still a better climber he was saying look if I can do it, so can you. But what he was doing was every time I had a success attempt, he would do it. so that sticks in my mind because he did actually help me achieve it. I couldn't quite actually let go and commit but because he was egging me on I actually let go and did it! (**SOCIAL**). So I actually remember that one quite well and that actually made quite a difference in my climbing ability (rope climbing) so after that dyno's and dynamic moves after that became much easier. Cos I could experience the sensation and be committed to just jumping and letting go! [laughs] and throwing yourself at it cos that's the hardest part getting through that mental barrier. The actual doing it is not so bad. (**ACHIEVEMENT**)

- **Any top roping examples?**

Such a blur, so many to choose from...I always enjoy the marathon wall like we did last week. I always find those really good, often attempted them and haven't got anywhere! Well we get someone but we never finish them, I always remember those. You know like one day I'll finish you, one day I'll beat you!
(PERSEVERANCE)

- **Does climbing give you a sense of identity at all?**

Yeah I mean sometimes in the past I've been married to one hobby, one thing, but as I go on I realise that they are all possible interpretations of my underlying sense of self (**IDENTITY - INDIVIDUAL**), does that make sense? Like there's something about them that you wouldn't actually link them if you put them all down on paper they look like completely separate things but to me there's like a feeling that's connecting all these things together and when you get into it dig into it there's very similar sensibilities and things that carry across and I think it's those things that actually represent my identity underneath; what it is and the current manifestation of my identity, it's just one possible [climbing?...]there's so many other things and it's quite liberating to realise actually. People always say everybody has one thing, but for me everybody has a small collection of underlying sort of sub-skills and you can find hundreds of ways of applying those underlying sensibilities and skills, (**IDENTITY - INDIVIDUAL**) I have a very mathematical brain, logical and I've managed to apply that to currently 4 hobbies and there's also hundreds that I'd like to do at some point within sport but at least for the time being...it's reassuring cos at least you don't put all your eggs in one basket because God forbid anything happens where I can't climb anymore, that wouldn't unravel me as a person. As horrible it would be it's not the one thing any longer. It's like with music, I used to be like why am I not the best, why aren't I Jimmy Hendricks already! Maybe I just don't have that sparkle? That doesn't matter anymore, I can find other things if I don't have that musical spark and not be a musical genius that fine, doesn't matter – I can get a job programming funnily enough!

10. Can you talk me through the equipment that you use to indoor climb and the reasons for using them?

Yeah erm, I think shoes in particular are a funny thing because different people have different shape feet and there's no one set of shoes, they are a very personal thing (**EQUIPMENT - COMFORT**). You have to find...like I really like Scarpa as a brand – not to wear but to look at. For ages I'm like I love those Scarpa shoes, they're really cool. They always look really technical and nice, I tried a pair and they just didn't fit my feet at all. So I've got these Sportivas which actually just seem to work for my feet and I've spoken to other people before and they're like – yeah I had the same thing. Like I went for Scarpa's but it didn't work and then I found these and so there's a certain sort of personal side when it comes to those (**EQUIPMENT - COMFORT**). I think with the harnesses and things matter a little bit less, err people just get one, if it works it works, if it's comfortable it's fine but people do get very detailed with the shoes, especially with the culture or wearing shoes that are too small for you. People seem to think that wearing shoes that hurt make you climb better, the more crooked and bent up your toes are the more solid your feet are but it's a very divisive point of view cos there's a lot of hardcore older climbers that will tell you it's absolutely essential but then a lot of other people will disagree, I'm from the school that I disagree. Like for me, my feet are hurting makes it harder to climb well especially if you're going to do bouldering stuff when you've got bicycle climbs where you put your toe on the other side of the hold and squeeze [feet on top of each other]. But if you've got shoes that are too tight I have no idea how they squeeze with the tops of their toes, it's excruciating [laughs]. So, for me it's kind of some and some, I think it's one of those things that may make a difference at the world class level but then it trickled down to everyone else – if you're not climbing 12c's outdoor it probably doesn't matter. When you talking about getting to the finite millimetres and stuff it's like, I don't know, world class fighters and stuff saying how 1 pound weight makes such a difference and that but if you're just a national league or local then you're not at that top 0.1 % level where in any sport, cycling or whatever...I don't think Dad really notices that his bike is 1.5kg not 1.2kg or if you're trying to win the Daytona or something you probably would notice cos you're like World class level so I think it's a trickle down from that, it's a curious thing. (**EQUIPMENT - COMFORT**)

- ***You've mentioned before that your shoes are painful. That although taking them off is a relief, putting them back on is gets more painful. Can you tell me the reasons why you decide to suffer in them?***

Erm yeah in particular its worse when you haven't been climbing for a while (**EQUIPMENT - COMFORT**) so I think that was me coming back from a hiatus. Erm I mean my climbing shoes are ½ a size smaller than my natural shoe size, so I have slightly subscribed to the shoe game! Only because there's a little room in my normal shoes so then I figured ½ a size seems reasonable. But part of it is to do with my shoes being a little bit damaged so I got a hole in the end of them, I got them repaired but the hole has come back but I think I got them repaired to late cos inside the actual material has broken through so my toes are always pressing against a split in the material which makes them hurt a bit more, my toes are forcing out, next time I need to get them repaired before the inside part gets affected, so that's part of the comfort thing behind that. Yeah its... they always end up hurting though! (**EQUIPMENT - COMFORT**)

- **Is there any other equipment you use that has meanings?**

Well its mostly just the shoes I think. I think if you were going to climb outdoors, like trad climbing that would probably [have meaning], I would like to get equipped for that but would cost a small fortune (**EQUIPMENT - INEXPENSIVE**), by the time you start buying all the clamps and things, I'm sure with that kind of gear you get quite attached, especially over a long time using different types of equipment and all that kind of thing. Funnily enough climbing is one of the things where equipment takes a back seat compared to my other hobbies. With the others I have my expensive mountain bike, programming I have my expensive computer and I love having it set up like I want it and it's all a big thing and the exact tools I like to use and programmes, with the guitar even the scale of the frets on the guitar and how many frets and the types of guitars and I have preferences for all of those but beyond shoes in climbing it's just less and less focus put on the actually gear itself, as long as you have gear that works (**EQUIPMENT - SAFETY**), a harness that is comfortable and will stop you from dying than that's all a harness needs to do. I still sometimes get drawn into it a little bit like walk past a climbing magazine and think, ooo shiny, new thing and some fandangled technology! But it is largely functional with that kind of thing as long as it meets some baseline standards for safety and comfort that's the main thing, I get less geeky about it than my other things.

With everything else I spend almost more time obsessing over my rig or set-up, I'm very like gear-centric kind of...I end up...I'm the sort of person who would know everything about the electronics I'm using but not be very good at actually using them, it's probably my problem with music that I actually know more about how to play music than actually demonstrate, I end up being a 'gear-head' and a theory person and that kind of sensibility and it kind of flips with climbing and becomes more about the actual physical practice of it, which I've never really thought about until this point actually.

- **How do you feel about the knot tying?**

Yeah it just becomes second nature after a while although I'm making a conscious effort to avoid it as much as possible in becoming second nature to continuing the self-checks (**EQUIPMENT - SAFETY**), like we had that situation we heard about a couple of weeks ago when the man came off the top of the wall because he wasn't tied on properly you can end up with that complacency when you've been doing it for so long (**SAFETY ROUTINES**). So yeah it does become just a thing you do but as much as possible I try and notice it...I've been half way up the wall many, many times and been like ooo check your knot! And you come down, but it's a bit late by that point. It's a bit of an awkward situation if you realise you didn't have it on, yeah it just becomes a second [nature] thing (**SAFETY ROUTINES**), but with outdoor climbing I would like to become a first class citizen for more of a better phrase outside because there's a lot more to it, here you just tie on that's it you go, whereas out there are so many different ways to attach yourself to different things, you've got belaying and abseiling and multi-pitch climbs, and bolted and unbolted routes like traditional climbing and you have to sling yourself onto something at the top like belaying from the top and all that kind of thing and it becomes a lot more important so in that context I'd like to learn it. I would like to be a regular Ray Mear's and know all the knots and like it branches out further.

- **Do you have any routines involving the equipment?**

Erm not particularly to be honest not that I can really think of to be honest, unless getting a coffee first if that counts?

The only routine I have is choosing climbs that are way too hard for me, there is that! I think that part of it comes the distance of the climbing gym is to where we are, the availability of it. Like I would like to make it more if a...like I said if this place was closer I'd like to make it down here 5 times a week, training more on the auto-belays and then you'd have the opportunity to separate training from playing I guess like you'd do with the guitar – you'd do drills and then I'd play but because of lack of availability you kind of just merge the two. Whereas if I had it on my doorstep you can pop here before work for an hour and do a training session specifically and that's when you can build those routines and be like right on a weds morning I do 10 4's just to build endurance up and then this and that but we just come here and check what we wants to do and get the most out of it (**FITNESS**)

- **Would you ever use someone else's equipment and why?**

Depends who they are I suppose. Err well it depends how much you trust them (**TRUST**). I'd feel quite uneasy if I turned up on an organised trip and they just dump a load of generic harness down, I'd be more inclined to use my own then. Um yeah I just can't see a situation where I would, it's nice to having your own equipment, you get familiar with it and while I said before that I don't geek out over which harness and what not but at the same time you do kind of form familiarity and almost like a bond (**TRUST**) with the gear you have, like my harness had literally stopped me from dying a bunch of times. So erm yeah you do get used to it, the feel of the equipment and you have different belay bugs and again, just different feel, if I use Dad's it just feels weird cos he's got a different shaped one (**EQUIPMENT - FAMILIAR**). So yeah, I would 'conditionally' use other people's equipment.

Appendix 7 – Coding and Thematic Analysis

Codes	First Order Themes	Second Order Themes
Accessibility Convenient Consistent Predictable Inclusive ability Personal injuries overcome Comfort – place Inconvenient location	Benefits of the Venue	The efficiency of the physical setting
Safety - venue Safety routines – knots, communication Safety - partners	Importance of Safety	
Social Friends Support and advice Encouragement Acceptance No judgements Trust Bond – climbing partners, sixth sense, variety Competition Staff – respect, competent, safe Loyalty in people	Involvement of the People at the venue	Social relationships at the venue
Challenge Progress Pushing yourself Perseverance Variety Route changes Frustration Investment in facilities Technology changes embraced Stepping up Determination Embrace failure Competence in climbing and belaying Transition to outdoor climbing Lacking in confidence/self-conscious Problem solving Improvement Achievement Satisfaction Personal best Buzz Exhilaration Pleasure Energised Enjoyment Liberating Freedom Escape Cleansing Climbing movements Excitement Personal Endeavour Overcoming fears Fitness Identity - individual Fairness/honesty Cheating Loyalty in place Authentic Sport identity	Experience of Climbing	The challenge of the climbing experience
Equipment – safety Equipment – comfort Equipment – simple Equipment – inexpensive Equipment – familiar Equipment – personal	Connections to the personal climbing equipment	